




3 1761 03596 7652

PELOPS
BY ARTHUR DILLON



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



Presented to the
LIBRARY *of the*
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
by

Gilbert Norwood

Prof Gilbert Norwood from the Winter A.D. ~ 1923~

PELOPS

By the same Author

RIVER SONGS

THE GREEK KALENDS

KING WILLIAM I. THE CONQUEROR

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

KING ARTHUR PENDRAGON

ORPHEUS

THE HEIR'S COMEDY

THE TRAGEDY OF SAINT ELIZABETH
OF HUNGARY

LETO SUPPLIANT

PELOPS

A Tetralogy

THE CHARIOTEERS

CHRYSIPPUS

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

AND TANTALUS: *a Satyric Play*

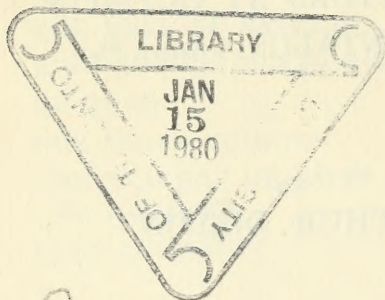
BY

ARTHUR DILLON

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET, W.

M CM XII



PR
4599
D425-P4

THE FABLE

THE family history of Pelops, beginning with Tantalus, culminates in the stories of Orestes, Electra and Iphigenia.

Tantalus had been admitted to the intimacy of the Gods. But he served them up the flesh of his own son Pelops. They were 'ware of it, and would not eat, restoring Pelops to life. They then ruined Tantalus, by the hand of King Tros; and doomed him to everlasting hunger and thirst, in Orcus. Pelops, fleeing for his life, came to Pisa in Elis, where King CEnomaüs ruled. King CEnomaüs had an only child, Hippodamia; and since an oracle had foretold his own death through the instrumentality of a son-in-law, he would give her in marriage only to a suitor who should defeat him in the chariot-race, in which he deemed himself secure of success. Those who failed, he beheaded; and set their heads on poles over his gates. Thirteen he had thus slain, when

PELOPS

Pelops arrived at Pisa, and contended in the race. Hippodamia induced Myrtilus, the King's Charioteer, to leave out the lynch-pins of her father's chariot, with the result that his chariot broke down on the course, and he himself was thrown out and killed. Whereupon Pelops married his daughter, and made himself King in his room.

Here the present dramatic action begins ; and is in form a Tetralogy, that is to say, a cycle of four members, comprising a trilogy, or sequence of three tragedies followed by a satyric play, connected in subject-matter.

The first Play of the series opens with Myrtilus craving reward, which Hippodamia refuses ; denouncing him to Pelops as insulting her ; while Myrtilus denounces her, as her father's murderer.

Pelops kills Myrtilus ; and puts away Hippodamia and her children, Atreus and Thyestes, as tainted with parricide, leading home as his bride the Nymph Danaïs.

Within the house, the shade of Œnomaüs appears to Hippodamia, and prophesies the curse of bloodshed remaining upon her whole lineage for generations ; yet adding that she and Pelops shall receive divine honours at Olympia ; but on separate plots of ground, walled apart, Heracles making the first sacrifice there.

In the second Play, the Nymph Danaïs has deserted

THE FABLE

Pelops as years gathered upon him ; but has left him a son, Chrysippus, upon whom all his hope centres.

Atreus and Thyestes, now grown to man's estate, murder Chrysippus for envy ; and are exiled by their father, from whose wrath Hippodamia also flees to Midia.

In the third Play, Pelops, after the death of Hippodamia at Midia, has brought her bones to Olympia, where he is celebrating the games ; and buries them there ; while he seeks news of his exiled sons.

His sister, Niobe, visits him ; but brings him no tidings.

At last, he is told by a Messenger and by the Chorus that, after mutual wrongs, Thyestes, by the hand of Ægisthus his son, has slain Atreus. Whereupon Pelops withdraws into his tent—his *tent*, for Olympia was not a city, but a group of shrines by the Stadium.

There Heracles, coming to Olympia to confirm the established games, finds him, and sees him die ; and appoints his burial and divine honours to be paid him by the Elders of Pisa.

This Trilogy, as a whole, sets forth the founding of the Olympian Games, and of the Cult of the Hero Pelops.

The fourth—or Satyric—Play shows Tantalus mocked by Silenus and the Satyrs.

	PAGE
THE CHARIOTEERS	11
CHRYSIPPUS	45
THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA	91
TANTALUS	133

SONNET

In place of script, give me the living voice—
This man and woman of antiquity
Alive upon a stage, for eyes to see,
“Done in the round,” the pother and the noise
And all the senses present ! This be my choice ;
Although all my machinery should be
The ‘Thespian wagon ; and, for my tragedy,
Players clad in goat-skin. These pedantic toys,
These printer’s types cut in a core of lead,
These cannot bow with shame, nor start with fear.
How move the soul to pity or to dread,
Except I enter lively at the ear
With sounding numbers for the numbers read
Out of these pages that lie printed here ?

THE CHARIOTEERS

THE CHARIOTEERS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PELOPS, King of Pisa in Elis.

MYRTILUS, his Charioteer.

A DROVER.

HIPPODAMIA, Queen of Pisa.

HER TWO CHILDREN ; and DANAÏS, a Nymph, mute.

CHORUS OF CHARIOTEERS.

The SCENE is laid at Pisa in Elis : before the Palace.

(Enter CHORUS.)

CHORUS. The most excellent glory of man is the horse.
For the God of Earthquake ploughed with his trident the clay
Whence Athene gave us her olive oil ;
And indigenous, out of the virgin soil,
His chaplet force
And his garland speed,
The colt unbroken, the first of his breed,
Sprang forth thence with a neigh.

PELOPS

The great stallion of battle, all chequered in foam,
Lo, the coursing Pegasus at the chariot pole,
And the blood-mare laid in the fallow, these
I name god-sends. Upon our rolling leas
Of rich red loam,
Where the kid and lamb
Bleat loud in springtime, each whinnying dam
Gives her milk to her foal.

But within, in good order, of resinous pine,
Of the seasoned timber fashioned to every board,
To their naves and axel-trees white as bone,
In the stable which Pelops declares his own,
Stand cars—to shine
In the sun, when shere,
With godlike horses, that charioteer
Drives forth over the sward.

How Prince Pelops climbed unto such wealth from the
ground—
How he came, a runaway with a price on his head,
To our palace gates, is of long ago.
How he lifted his eyes, and beheld a row
Of skulls uncrowned
In the chariot-race,
Aloft on poles.—But he hardened his face,
Gazing up at the dead.

For Cœnomaüs, when first the oracle showed
How his end should, under Fate, of a son-in-law come,

THE CHARIOTEERS

Said, if soul should Hippodamia crave,
On the race course that soul should her father brave
Where either rode
In his chariot,
And distance him in the contest ; if not,
Death else being the doom.

Straightway Pelops the child of King Tantalus, moved
By the Goddess Aphrodite who casteth out fear,
That unmastered daughter desires to wife.
Though to ask, and come short, be to feel the knife,
As others proved ;
Or the bloody axe.
Prince Pelops wants not for horses nor lacks
Female charioteer.

For, lo, Hippodamia, arrayed as a bride,
In her car of rapid wheel, with the yoke on her steeds,
At the starting-point took her place ; and thus
Gave a team to the offspring of Tantalus.
The start is cried :
They are off, anon :
First, neck and neck : ere a quarter is run,
King Œnomaüs leads.

I have seen, in the middle of riot, brought down
By a sudden check, the darling of happiness fall
Unto hunger penniless. Even so
King Œnomaüs, rushing past hope to woe,
Lost child, life, crown.

PELOPS

For, on either side,
His wheels flew off ; and he fell there and died
Full in sight of us all.

Whether malice of man, or the Judgment of Gods
Had the lynch-pins drawn, it were folly to say.
Lo, I make no question, so hear no lies.
But the Prince made our Kingdom of Elis his prize.
And justice nods
When a ruler falls,
And his successors inherit his halls,
Hiding scandal away.

Be it pondered ; when Phaëthon's twelve hours' loan
Of the solar teamsters pulverized heaven, beneath
His career of fool in the highest, soon
Was he pitched the full height of the sun at noon.
Abate your tone
And make friends of fears,
O Royal couple of charioteers ;
Fate hath swords in the sheath.

(Enter, from the fields, MYRTILUS.)

MYRTILUS. Comrades and fellow servants.

CHORUS.

Myrtilus,

Chief charioteer, and master among us,
As to CEnomaüs, to Pelops now,
And to his Queen, in lordly office, thou

THE CHARIOTEERS

Hailing us comrades hast a comely speech.

MYRTILUS. A brother, my good men, I call ye each,
In Pisa of Elis. But now, give me place
And privy room, before our Lady's face
To speak ; because my burden is of right
So to go in and out, with oversight
On the upkeep of every littered stall.

CHORUS. We will withdraw ourselves.

MYRTILUS. Stand within call ;
But close your ears, and let them not attend
The Queen too zealously ; lest you offend,
As claiming for all of you, what to me,
Charioteer as yourselves, must fitly be
Given in orders.

CHORUS. Be we heard and seen,
But nothing hear. Stand thou before the Queen.

Pelops, once braised for Olympian messes,
Time hath divided into terms of years,
With games recurrent ; and his wisdom blesses
Us men of Elis ; while caresses
And a crown upon Hippodamia's tresses
Wipe away her orphan tears.
Who shall measure a city's joy,
Or a royal twain's in a growing boy ?
In princes and princesses ?

PELOPS

(Enter, from the palace, HIPPODAMIA ; she stands by the altar before the door.)

HIPPODAMIA. Peloponesian Poseidon, Poseidon,
Shoals of the dolphin, with the fleets of ships,
Within the hollow of thy hand, Poseidon,
Float ! Lift thy head, O Lord Poseidon,
In the midst of us ! Brother of Zeus, Poseidon,
Hearken to my open lips ;
Scan not either offence of word
Or of thought or act, everlasting Lord,
My husband's God, Poseidon !

CHORUS. Hail, Hippodamia.

HIPPODAMIA. Hail ; and to Myrtilus
My lord so leans on. What wouldst thou with us.

MYRTILUS. I have a question of thy household
wealth.

HIPPODAMIA. Ask it here. Is there need to ask by
stealth ?

MYRTILUS. None. But we publish not our inward
store.

HIPPODAMIA. Speak on.

MYRTILUS. I do beseech you close the door,
Standing within the ante-chamber.

HIPPODAMIA. No.
Yonder men's heads are toward the fields. But show

THE CHARIOTEERS

Shortly what thy affairs. Make thy drift clear.

MYRTILUS. I was Ænomaüs' trusty charioteer.
How well I served him, thou thyself knows best.
So, in thy branches, would I make my nest.

HIPPODAMIA. My husband loves thee; and thy
fortunes wax.

MYRTILUS. I love King Pelops' love. Yet something
lacks;
And I would mingle honey with the wine.

HIPPODAMIA. Why dost thou pour thy glances into
mine?

MYRTILUS. Couldst thou embark, with thy devoted
friend,
On such a voyage, and not scan the end?

HIPPODAMIA. Oh, there is menace of discourtesy
Scarcely sub-conscious in thee!

MYRTILUS. Eye to eye,
We saw whilom; and shall we now grow strange
To one another?

HIPPODAMIA. Toward what dost thou range?
Leave that old furrow thou dost ever till.
Mark me: presume not too much on the ill
Which makes me dumb before thee.

MYRTILUS. Be thou dumb,
Dumb of denial. Hippodamia, come;

PELOPS

Pelops is now unto Olympia gone,
Answering grave calls ; and we are here alone—
Thou and I.

HIPPODAMIA. Thou and I have often met.

MYRTILUS. Have I not dared such things as never
yet

A man dared but for woman? I speak in press
Of feverish turmoil. Oh, for nothing less
Than for thy favour were such treason done
As I for thee engaged in. Wilt thou stone
The love that hungers for thee, blow on blow
Upon the crown of loving?

HIPPODAMIA. Woe is me, woe !
I took thee for a friend, faithful to me,
And to my fame, even in treachery ;
Wherein engaging with you, I confess
I am laid open unto foul excess
Of insult and of shame.

MYRTILUS. With me be one ;
For we are no more twain in evil done.
Reward my evil with this good.

HIPPODAMIA. Take gold
In plenty. I will rob my husband's hold ;
Steal half the treasure of his coffers ; blind
Discovery with bold words, when he shall find

THE CHARIOTEERS

Two-thirds of his wealth wanting ; nay, the whole
I empty gladly to content thy soul ;
But move not such a suit as now you urge.
I am bound to the pillar, for the scourge
Your fulsome tongue lays on me, perforce calm
Where I would blaze indignant.

MYRTILUS.

Pour soft balm

Into my aching wounds ; give me the taste
And sweet enjoyment of my time to waste
In Hippodamia's arms.

HIPPODAMIA.

Infamous wretch,

This instant will I send a slave to fetch
My royal chamberlain, my husband home ;
And tell him what thou art.

MYRTILUS.

It shall become

Thy wisdom better to enforce no word
Out of my lips, wherein the headsman's sword
Is latent for thee. I am a desperate man
Who never yet turned back ; who neither can,
Having begun, nor will not. Open out
This history of desire, and do not doubt,
With the whole story, every detail given,
From first to last, shall Pelops' ear be riven.
I served your murderous wish ; who would believe,
Except I found fair kindness as I gave,

PELOPS

That I would meddle in such danger? Think;
In goodly office, should I near the brink
Of utter ruin which detection meant,
For a day's pastime; only to content
Great Pelops' happiness, and not mine own?
Who would accept it so? I say, not one
In all Achaia. When I did the deed
Thyself hadst planned upon thy father's head,
'Tis certain in men's thoughts that thou hadst paid
Such wages to me as thou art afraid
'To render me in deed and kind.

HIPPODAMIA.

Beware!

Turn round, ye men: see what a queen will dare.
One storm shall clear the pestilential breath
That hangs about the house, though it be death.

CHORUS. We served thy sire in humble faith,
whilom;
And will his daughter.

HIPPODAMIA.

When will Pelops come?

CHORUS. Command us. Lo, the King! Whatso
betide,
Find thy true refuge by thy husband's side.

(Enter, from the fields, PELOPS.)

HIPPODAMIA. My lord, my lord, Pelops.

THE CHARIOTEERS

PELOPS.

What sickness heats

Dear Hippodamia ?

HIPPODAMIA. Feel how my heart beats.

PELOPS. Now, in the fructifying of our power,
Thy father's city brought me as thy dower,
The Olympic course marked out, and stadium
Measured out for the foot-race, whither come
The flower of Greece, now, in our happy time,
What sickness lowers upon thee in thy prime ?
My Queen, what sickness, thou so passing dear ?
It was a deadly chance that brought us near :
A broken wheel, giddy as fortune's, gave
Thy peerless bosom to my arms. The grave
Only shall snatch thee hence. What lurid flush
Changes thy forehead ? Now thou'rt pale. Oh, hush :
Let me not vaunt my treasures ! Art thou sick ?
Hippodamia, thy breath comes short and thick.
The Gods have blessed our union to the full ;
And we have rendered back their praise, humble
As taking all from them.

HIPPODAMIA. A title weak ;

For what the Gods have made, that will they break.
You see this man before you ; our tried friend.
Whether the Island Goddess we offend
With slackened rites I know not. But he asks,

PELOPS

With blatant lip—the thought of it unmasks
My very soul to shame that I have heard
Such a thing uttered—asks, even at a word,
As if Queen Hippodamia were a thing
To grant it, that which like a curse doth ring
Yet in mine ears which I would fain stop up
Against all sound for ever, ere they sup
Once more on such a tale.

PELOPS. These are such words
As say, the gift wives owe their wedded lords
Alone, this man would rob me of.

HIPPODAMIA. Pelops, yes.

PELOPS. Then hast thou said enough ; more were
excess.

MYRTILUS. Which I will add. I was a useful slave
In service, when Queen Hippodamia gave
That victory into thy hands. Oh, hear!
CÆnomäus our King, year after year,
Her still-defeated suitors put to death.
Thirteen fair princes yielded up their breath,
Trying their fates, where Hippodamia was
The prize; beheading being the price of loss;
Thirteen fair youths; and, still a maid un-won,
Still Hippodamia wore out life alone,
Fretting her beauty. Then thou, last, didst dare

THE CHARIOTEERS

The mortal contest. When, as in despair
Of married honours, gazing on thy youth,
Her ruth for thee conquered a daughter's ruth.
She crept to me that night before the race ;
Bribed me to draw the lynch-pins from their place,
And send my master, on his rocking car,
Down to the regions where all dead men are.
And I consented. Oh, the bribe was dear !
I served her will too well. In mid career,
No accident, no God, a daughter sent
Our King *Ænomaüs* the way he went
Mangled unto the Shades, with every bone
Broken by her whom he begat. Alone,
Of all the heroes, thou alone didst win
That horse-woman *Hippodamia* whom her sin,
Home-keeping murder, gave unto thine arms.
Not *Myrtilus* makes question of her charms ;
Nor that such are, by such a crime, well bought.

CHORUS. Mistress and slave, ye are in your own net
caught.

PELOPS. What answers *Hippodamia* ? Part and lot
Thou hast in this ; but how far, I know not.
That thou didst flatter him, it well may be ;
Since he swerved from his master's trust for thee.
That thou didst put thyself into his power,

PELOPS

To earn his direful help, is plain this hour.
Whether, while playing on his villainy
To thine own purpose, thou withheld'st the fee,
Parent's blood cries aloud.

CHORUS. One against other,
Each is accuser and accused together.
But thou, O Child of Tantalus, I view
Thy fury, but know not what thou wilt do.

PELOPS. Harness my chariot ; put to my steeds
That Lord Poseidon gave me. Through the meads
And arable of Elis, by the course
Of King Ænomaüs' race, pressing each horse,
Toward Corinth, by the Achaian coast, afar,
Myrtilus, do thou drive me on my car,
With that immortal team, truly to enquire
Of oracles. No fluctuating ire
Shall sway our government : I, rather, stand
For justice, and deliberate command
Over our anger, listening to the voice
Of great Poseidon. In no wayward choice,
But after the God's will, so shall I strive.
Up to the goal shall Pelops ever drive.
Let great Poseidon, Myrtilus, be judge
Twixt thee and me ; nor after, bear no grudge
On either side. But, Hippodamia, wait,

THE CHARIOTEERS

Putting thyself into the hands of fate.
Myrtilus, take the reins.

(Exit with MYRTILUS, toward the fields.)

HIPPODAMIA. Pelops, without pause,
Is gone : no judgment given in my cause.

CHORUS. We are as watchers by the sick bedside, who
watch
Through the small hours of the night, the painful ebb
and flow
Of strength and weakness ; dreading most the day's
approach ;
And the chill before the dawn, that shall find us watching so.

HIPPODAMIA. Watchers, what of the night ? For the
greyhound seconds drop slow ;
A year hangs in the air ; a great suspense doth scotch
The chariot-wheels of the Sun ; the moments come and go
On broken wing ; and the minutes limp by upon a crutch.

CHORUS. Ah, Queen—In the midst and middle passage
I check my speech.
Thy plea, O Child of a King, is thy father's cruelty, a tale
Of murderous cruelty. We are churls who can carry and
fetch ;
We know to tame our horses, and drive them up from the
vale,
And water them, and halter their heads in the head-stall.

PELOPS

But now must we tame the times. For thou, Queen, hast
made a breach

In thine own city ; and liest uncovered to the angry
gale.

Yet nothing can we but stand by, looking each on each.

HIPPODAMIA. Behold, I am as a wounded roe on the
mountains ; the pass

Is full of the herd, but I am alone on the height, to thirst

And starve ; as Bellerophon who wanders in all distress

With a brother's blood on his hands, accounting himself for
accursed,

Because he sealed those lips which along with his own were
nursed.

Fearful to dwell in the city or in the wilderness,

He fled with a message that plotted his own death. I am at
the worst !

Oh, the children of my people shall call me Murderess !

CHORUS. I hear the future roar as tumultuous tides that
hiss

With overlapping billows. But now, in the lee and lull,

It were wisest to strike sail ; before the surges kiss

The skies ; and to cast out anchors, anchoring the hull,

If any roadstead at all may hold. When tempests pull

At the top-hamper, what skills for handmaiden or princess,

For the Lord of Peloponesus, for Pelops or for his thrall ?

Sorrow hath no respect of person or of place.

Mistress, there comes one who hath galloped hard

On horseback, now dismounting in the yard.

THE CHARIOTEERS

(Enter, from the fields, a DROVER.)

HIPPODAMIA. Why comes he from the fields? Mine
is no mood

For idleness.

DROVER. To speak without falsehood——
Before Poseidon's judgment-seat is cast
Some soul or other.

CHORUS. Shew what news thou hast.

DROVER. Give ear. Yet grant me breath. A tale I
bring

Untoward ; for I saw King Pelops fling
A man out of his car into the waves.
What man? One of his disobedient slaves?
What man? Or I deceive myself, it was
The son of Hermes, Godlike Myrtilus.
Hearken ! I drove my fillies up from feed ;
And marked the chariot of the King, at speed,
Raising the dust along the utmost ledge.
The rim of his swift wheels cut up the edge
Of the outer road ; when, by the neck and thigh,
He gripped his charioteer ; and held him high
Above his head. Then, like a pebble shot
Out of a shepherd's leathern sling, God wot,
The wretched man, shrieking a curse, was spun

PELOPS

Head over heels. Oh, it was Hermes' son ;
For certain, Myrtilus, our charioteer.
An age it seemed, an age, to watch and hear
The fall, and falling curse, before the plash
That flayed him, plunged into the watery wash,
From such height. I have ridden pell-mell back,
To tell thee this. The King is on my track.

HIPPODAMIA. Our thanks for earliest news. I wait
within.

(Exit, into palace.)

CHORUS. Oh, may this one man's death atone for sin !
DROVER. I will remount, and so back to the drove.

(Exit, toward the fields.)

CHORUS. None welcomed discord home, and after
throve.

Beneath the foot of our land, beneath the spot where she
stamps
Her foot on the virgin marge and base of her seaward ramps,
Beneath her stormy walls and watchtowers round about,
Poseidon hath scattered thy bones among the hippocamps,
O Myrtilus. The welter hath been to thee a deathbed ;
For thy angry ghost is drowned in whirlpool and water spout ;
Where the sailors'-weatherglass shall root upon thy head.

THE CHARIOTEERS

Hark, hark ! the chariot-wheels of Pelops returned in
wrath !

For the wealth of Olympia, I would not cross his path ;
Yet groan in spirit for him. Far better the seething pot
Had scalded him sodden for good, not spared for the sorrow
he hath,

When his righteousness is called to judgment on his own
flesh.

Now Hippodamia's deed, uncovered, smoking hot,
Is brought to the light of day, as tidings new and fresh.

(Re-enter PELOPS, from the fields.)

PELOPS. Say, where is Hippodamia ?

CHORUS.

Within doors.

(Re-enter HIPPODAMIA, from the palace.)

She answers for herself.

HIPPODAMIA.

Our flooded shores

Have soaked to death the wretched charioteer
Who offended me ?

PELOPS.

I flung his carrion clear

Of the cliffs, into deep water. Ere he drank
The final bitterness of all, and sank,
He cursed us in our children.

HIPPODAMIA.

What Gods heard ?

PELOPS

PELOPS. These other charioteers who never stirred
To give me knowledge of what things were done,
Shall all hang for it.

HIPPODAMIA. Of these men, not one
Knew of the matter, from beginning to end.

PELOPS. At present I will make my doubt their friend :
These are not indoor to me ; but I must
And shall be, here upon my hearthstone, just ;
Although the trade of Myrtilus be foul,
Common murder, yet let my verdict howl
Its finding against thee, into a waste
Where is no ear to hear, nor none to taste
The horrible recital ; father's blood
Sluiced out by daughter, puddling into mud
The dry and dusty course——

HIPPODAMIA. I see it yet :—
The horses ; and the body in a net
Of reins and traces ; the whole wreck dragged on,
Ploughing the earth ; my sire trampled upon
By our own horses on the top of him ;
The ragged scalp wound, and each battered limb !
I stood a victor in a city sacked,
Knowing myself the author of the fact !
Your love the cause.

PELOPS. In thee is my seed accursed

THE CHARIOTEERS

In origin. Woman who rudely burst
The bonds of nurture, out of Pelops' vine
I cut thee, a dead branch, with all the line
That issues from our union so begun.
After this, I acknowledge neither son
Nor thee.

CHORUS. Out, and alas, alas ! For now
Justice becomes violation.

HIPPODAMIA. What wouldst thou,
Pelops ? Ought I, the daughter of a King,
From youth to age, still to lie languishing,
Captive ? Was he a father, to compel
A daughter's eyes to gaze on what befell
Her lovers, one by one ; their heads, cut off,
Spiked upon poles ? Oft-times I heard him scoff
At their exhibited relics. There was I,
A solitary, causing men to die,
Innocent as I was that they were slain.
I lay awake of nights ; and oft in vain
Have screwed my fists into my eyes to hide
The vision of those heads set up outside.
Was this a father ? Should I have let him slay
Thee ; and thy teeth let whistle night and day
In the shrill wind, if I had saved thee not ?
I would do all again. The chariot

PELOPS

Broken down, was it certain that the fall
 Meant his destruction? It were enough, and all
 I ever sought, that he should lose the race,
 Giving poor Hippodamia to thy embrace—
 Thy bride and saviour.

PELOPS. I partook of sin,
Partaking with thee ; and drank ruin in.
Another matron Pelops' house shall claim
To bear his hopes. Give place unto a dame
No parent's slaughter giveth to the home.
Confederate to pluck on thy father's doom,
How bend his driver to thy course, unless
With more than lawful promise ? Thou dost confess
Favours to him proposed, if thou declare
Only how close thou drewest his ear, to share
Designs with him.

HIPPODAMIA. Slander not me, a Queen.
I did all for thy love, and I am clean.

PELOPS. Are there not traitresses in divers kind?
Beckoning ready death to steal behind
Thy father, in despite of reverence,
In spite of holy dues, of recompense
Even for the gift of being, of the law
That places parents as the Gods in awe,
This was revolt no wrongs extenuate.

THE CHARIOTEERS

Love made thee do it? Rather it was hate.
So to despatch with greedy promptitude
The author of thy life, denies thy blood
The gentleness that is a woman's grace,
Equally with her honour.

HIPPODAMIA. Is thy face
Iron against me?

PELOPS. Wife to me no more!

CHORUS. Oh, lay her father's death at his own door!

PELOPS. I go to join another to my life,
Who now shall pluck from thee the name of wife :
Danaïs the Nymph, in prospect to provide
My throne's inheritor.

(Exit, toward the fields.)

HIPPODAMIA. Where is my pride,
To be so gentle in my woe ; so meek
Before him?

CHORUS. Woe is me ! I cannot speak.

HIPPODAMIA. Danaïs' child shall be preferred to thee,
Atreus, and thee, Thyestes ; I shall see
Our children, Pelops, ousted, giving place
To strangers : and, for mine, a stranger's face
Shall, at the fireside, look across at thine.
Danaïs is a nymph, and half divine.
I will not wait to see the wanton stalk

PELOPS

Into my bower, godless in her walk.
I will but fetch the princes I have borne
Thee, Pelops. One day, thou shalt be forlorn
As I am. Over-righteousness forebodes
Remorse to come, I hope.

(Half-entering the palace.)

These are my goods
Which beautify the place where I have dwelt.
I kiss the walls that I have lost through guilt.
I will but once more traverse the whole length
And breadth of the lodging. Only give me strength
To visit where my babies first drew breath,
The bed where I had hoped to rest in death
Some time. Let me hasten from room to room.

(Enters palace.)

CHORUS. The palace fills with preternatural gloom.

Thou art the daughter, thou the daughter born to the house,
Its mistress, Hippodamia. But thou stealest across the floor,
From space to silent space of its chambers like a mouse,
As afraid of thine own shadow. Door

And window, every room

Cries, 'Tis no more thy home !

Unlike, yet the same as ever it was before.

THE CHARIOTEERS

How hast thou purchased happiness and husband and child?

Thou hast lost thy husband for ever, thou hast murdered sweet household love,

By that same deed whereto thou looked'st for joy fulfilled.

But, I fear me, thy heart rather strove

For giddy sovereignty ;

To set thyself on high,

Arrayed in the vesture of purple thy handmaids wove.

Could'st thou not love sunshine, except it sparkled on gold,
On the burnished roof of a palace, on thy fillet and diadem?
The poor man's kid is dear to the Gods as incense rolled
From the marble altar unto them,

In my home-spun belief.

Contentment, although brief,

Were goodlier than curious bracelet or graven gem.

(*Enter, from the palace, HIPPODAMIA and her two sons,
ATREUS and THYESTES.*)

Queen in the doorway, coming forth, thou turnest thy back
Upon benefit, upon comfort. As the Titaness put aside
From bed and board—as Latona, inwardly draped in
black,

Shalt thou seek a corner, there to hide

Thy sorrow in. Oh, thou

And Pelops, coupled now,

Were as the Symplegades, wounding each other's side.

PELOPS

HIPPODAMIA. I have seen the spectre of my father
Œnomaüs.

CHORUS. When and where, Hippodamia?

HIPPODAMIA. But now here in the house.
Lo, I drag my two children forth in haste as it were from
the fire.

Out of the ground rose he who did on the ground expire.
With communion of dreams he came ; and the word which
he spake and said

Was charged with prophetic curses and threatenings of the
dead,

Forebodings and visitation out of our mother earth,
Our mother of visions. My children who blessed me in
their birth

Live under a ban of horror henceforward. I can but speak
My father's threats. Thyestes and Atreus, ye shall seek
Each other's evil, for generations yet to come.

He blessed me with honours divine hereafter. Would I
were dumb,

Ere I repeat it ! What unto me is oxymel
Plashed on the stones, when my blemishes all my descendants
quell ?

The ghost spake of my children, assuring unto them
Some honour of famous deed, mid dishonour of infamous
crime.

Pelops and I, engirdled each with a separate wall,
Shall keep in Olympia, and Alcides a ram shall hale
To our little crofts, in memory pouring libations there ;
But the seed of our stem shall internecine murder bear ;

THE CHARIOTEERS

Brother on brother, and child on parent, and parent on
child ;

Generations of murder !

CHORUS. Thy tumbled words are wild.

HIPPODAMIA. Have I cursed my children ?

CHORUS. Tantalus favoured of Zeus,
Feasting immortal Gods, contrived their foul abuse.

HIPPODAMIA. Old friends——

CHORUS. Enomaüs killed his thirteen to a man.

HIPPODAMIA. The ghost spake boldly——

CHORUS. This journey our forefathers began.

HIPPODAMIA. A dream, my father floats back among
dreams.

Yet, like a dying horse, his message screams

Now in mine ear. Shall these my children nurse

Family hate, an heirloom and a curse,

Against each other till the latter end ;

And my offence yet make them still offend

The avenging Furies, as myself dared do?

Oh, bad beginning followed ill.

CHORUS. I rue,

Most lamentable Queen, the bitter fruits.

HIPPODAMIA. Cannot I tear the past up by the roots ?

Can mortals never expiate the ill

That should die with them ? Must these boys fulfil

The tale of suffering myself do owe ?

PELOPS

Olympian vengeance should not stoop so low,
To strike a child.

CHORUS. There is, within the seed,
A growth from rose to rose, from weed to weed ;
So good and bad, like species, have increase.

HIPPODAMIA. Why thrust me through and through
 with it ? Peace, Peace,
Ye serpents, vipers who, with cloven tongue,
Poison the wounds ye open ; oh, among
Ye all, is mercy absent ?

CHORUS. Now is Truth
No Goddess, but a Gorgon. Oh, for ruth,
Let no man urge it on her ! I must abhor
The cruel heart of Pelops.

HIPPODAMIA. Judge no more.
He is a prince, on whom his House depends.

CHORUS. Most manifest. Then thus my story ends,
Which is a grief to tell : thy deed was done
To build thyself to a people and nation ;
Thy father murdered, to possess his land ;
Thyself : some strange God led thee by the hand.

HIPPODAMIA. So men misjudge woman ! Sorrow is
 proud :
Myself will be a curtain that shall shroud
The thoughts that I will keep with.

THE CHARIOTEERS

CHORUS.

Not a groan !

Her tearless passion eats her to the bone.

Behold, I will adventure a word, and utter my thought.
Pelops is over swift to cleave his house in twain.
He flingeth down a crumbling wall, in blind disdain
Of prayers, till the vestiges of his palace are brought to
nought.

A crying violence is upon earlier violence wrought :
A present fire made fierce to burn out a buried stain :
An evil tree uprooted, and a worse implanted again.
He maketh it hideous to do the thing he ought.
Ah, who shall declare the end of a day till the day be
done ?

We plough, and ear the furrow, and refrain our hand from
the field,
Tares or wheat. But the months must bring forth either
one ;

Our husbandry is much ; but the season giveth the yield.
But now is the sickle put to the crop, and the harvest
begun.

Oh, woman! O thou her husband, shield her as with a shield.

Remember, O son of Tantalus, thy head had been swept
From thy shoulders, but for Hippodamia's terrible aid
And her impiety. Yet even had she obeyed
A viler master than love of thee, O Pelops, or stept
Into a heartless crime, hath not her womanhood kept,

PELOPS

These many years, thy board, and borne thee children, and
laid

Her down in pain, on the bed of thy house, since she was a
maid ?

Remember, also, pity, thou judge in counsel adept.

Remember, mankind is but a sojourner, with a song

Put in his mouth ; but ere the song be mastered he dies.

An instrument of music is given him, among

The immortal Muses ; a quill to touch it, under the skies ;

An instrument with strings, whereunto to attune his
tongue ;

A stringed instrument ; but when the string is tense it
flies.

(Re-enter, from the fields, PELOPS leading DANAÏS.)

PELOPS. Behold the Queen of Pisa !

CHORUS. *(Pointing to HIPPODAMIA.)*

One Queen I know.

The King is more than wise ; and ought to go

Betwixt too facile and too harsh, with care,

Past Scylla and Charybdis, steering fair

A course with judgment : subjects go in terror

Who, overbold, convict a king of error.

PELOPS. Methinks ye play upon the double pipes.

But I will heal the kingdom though with stripes.

Queen Danaïs, take thy possessions. Look

THE CHARIOTEERS

Scarcely in passing on her who forsook
The righteous path. Let her abandonment
Be as a landmark. Only thy content
Shall ever be mine. Thou, Hippodamia, take
Good shelter for thy head, even for the sake
Of motherhood.

HIPPODAMIA. My claim is motherhood.
Go, children, stand where ye have always stood
Since first ye walked, one on his either side ;
And take his hands. He can but open wide
Tenderness when he feels your hands in his ;
This names him by the strongest name there is,
If ye call ' father.' 'Tis a broken spell,
I fear me, on my lips ; but ply it well ;
Zeus is called ' father.' Clasp not Pelops' knees,
As ye were suppliants from beyond the seas ;
Ye are children of his hands.

PELOPS. Lack not for meat,
Raiment nor roof ; but never share our seat
Of godlike kingdom, which is to be filled
By an unspotted progeny. O child,
Implore thy mother rather to be tame
Under her burden. Tears too much have blame
Of the Immortals. Hippodamia's seed
Shall be accounted as of lowly breed ;

PELOPS

Not of the King's. This Nymph shall recompense
My love with goodness.

(Exit PELOPS with DANAÏS, into the palace.)

HIPPODAMIA.

Children, follow them hence.

I thank the kind Gods for it, ye are too young to know
The meaning of the cruel lot to which ye grow :
Hippodamia your mother supplanted in the home.
But when the other children of happiness shall come
Betwixt your sire and you—when the other children shall
spit,
Shall spit upon you, be not ye too tame under it.

(Exit, with her sons, into the palace.)

CHORUS. In vain the upright man's intent, who thinks to
assuage
The wrath of the Gods, by steeping his life in a new outrage.
But, through wickedness or through goodness, through
righteousness or through evil,
The generations of every tribe and kindred travel ;
Necessity shapes action and speech. Yet our thoughts are
our own :
What we are we truly possess, and that alone.

(Exeunt.)

CHRYSIPPUS

CHRYSIPPUS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PELOPS, King of Pisa.

ATREUS & } his sons by Hippodamia.
THYESTES }

CHRYSIPPUS, his son by Danaïs.

HIPPODAMIA, first wife of Pelops.

DANAÏS, a Nymph, Queen of Pisa.

CHORUS OF NYMPHS, SISTERS OF DANAÏS.

The SCENE is laid as in "THE CHARIOTEERS."

(Enter, above the palace, DANAÏS.)

DANAÏS. I, Danaïs, bare to Pelops glorious
A son unto the house of Tantalus.
Yonder, my kindred troop, Protean maids,
Beings who go not down unto the Shades.
Nymphs these my sisters, who keep watch and ward
Over the palace. At King Pelops' board,
Hippodamia and her children sit

PELOPS

Eating their hearts out, in a wrathful fit ;
Since King CEnomaüs' murder plucked her race,
The deed revealed, from a majestic place
Downward. But thenceforth I walked Pelops' queen,
Till I forsook him. Be these nymphs a screen
Unto my princely son. Their company
Gathers about the portal presently.

(Enter CHORUS.)

CHORUS. Song is upon the wing ;
I cannot hold my tongue.
Chrysippus, thou son of a King,
Art goodly, joyous and young.
O Prince, O Child of the House, arise,
To Goddess and God, oh, sacrifice !

Pelops, to sweeten his life,
Married immaculate spouse,
Taking unto wife
Danaïs. Thee we rouse,
O Prince, O Child of their wedlock ; cense
Goddess and God, as with vapour dense !

Pungent vapour of smoke,
From altars flower-crowned,
Let waft ! Let rich wine soak
Into the reddening ground !
But Danaïs, O Danaïs,
Alack, thy ministry men miss !

CHRYSIPPUS

Ever and anon,
Dear sister of us all,
Chrysippus thine own son
Lacketh thee. Heed his call.
Thou forsakest the bed thou hast pressed.
Kites hang above thy abandoned nest !

DANAÏS. Ye sister nymphs who haunt the royal state
Of Pelops where he ruleth in the gate
Of ancient Pisa, speak ; and speak the truth ;
Tell me how fares my boy, forward in youth
And sport. For I, when Pelops' hair turned gray,
Went back from him, and walked another way ;
Not trailing my sublimer skirts with weed
Of mundane texture. But how grows our seed
Hymeneal, now I am passed and gone
To dwell among the Gods I look upon,
Moving about Arcadian thoroughfares,
Where I walk not the least among my peers ?
But ye, my sisters, watch beside the door
Where I was housewife once. Fain would I pore
On him as on her tablet Sybil old ;
Save that thoughts elemental me withhold,
Drawing me back from that which perisheth.
Speak, sister ; tell me, what thy knowledge sayeth
Of young Chrysippus, ere I shudder hence
Into the æther, not re-issuing thence

PELOPS

CHORUS. Thou hast it when we say, All well, so far.

(Enter, from palace, PELOPS and CHRYSIPPUS.)

Lo, see twain in the doorway where they are !
Danaïs, behold Pelops ; and, beside
The King, Chrysippus.

DANAÏS. Hiding I will hide.
Neither one, since I pass unto my place,
From this time forward, looks upon my face.

(Exit.)

CHORUS. Fleet as roebuck or stag,
Over stream, over crag,
Will Chrysippus go ;
Lightfoot, happy as dawn ;
While his arrows are drawn
With the barb to the bow.

Pelops joys in him.
Pelops' eyes grow dim ;
Grizzled is his lip ;
Yet he laughs aloud,
Hale of cheer, and proud
Seeing his youngest skip.

Oft Chrysippus shakes
Loosened rein, and makes
Furrows across the dew

CHRYSIPPUS

Cut by chariot wheels.
Pelops laughs ; and feels
Like exultance, too.

Sister Danaïs,
Let thy joy be this ;
That Chrysippus lives
Worshipping thy name,
What so his step-dame
Privily contrives.

But, Chrysippus, hate
Early come, and late
Ever kept at nurse,
Thy half-brothers feed ;
Seeing thee so speed.
Grant thou speed no worse.

Hate can break no bones ?
Let Thyestes' frowns
Atreus give again ?
Hippodamia, likewise,
Murdereth with her eyes
Only in malice vain ?

Hippodamia, beneath this roof,
Lives on, acting dumb reproof,
Patient in her hardship borne.

PELOPS

We onlookers hold aloof ;
Onlookers ; yet gaze on thee.
Hippodamia's heart was torn
Into shreds. Onlookers we !

Welcome, welcome, welcome, hail,
Hail, Chrysippus, all the vale
Calls thee from the homestead out ;
Prince, and king to be, the dale
Smiles to see thee at the door ;
Heir elect ; and twined about
With all our loves. Set on before !

*(During the Choric Ode, PELOPS and CHRYSIPPUS
serve the altars before the door.)*

PELOPS. Blythe huntsman, hopeful soldier who art
sprung
From Pelops old, and Danaïs ever young,
From me Pelops, and holy Danaïs,
May the dire Fates suffer me not to miss,
At least, the first-fruit of thy age ; in chief,
To see thee crowned with laurel or oak-leaf
Or, best, Olympic Victor in the games
I, thy sire, founded ; thou, above the names
Of rivals, in the place of honour set ;
When let me die happy in seeing it.
To speak no more of dying, son, I wot

CHRYSIPPUS

I put thee above others I begot
Earlier ; and, for queen and wife, I chose
Thy mother, not own mother unto those
That I displace for thee.

CHRYSIPPUS. I hold my head
Something depressed, for this. It hath been said,
Over-weening hurts the best of us. If, jealous,
I am proud of thy favour, I am zealous
To merit it. And still I bear in mind
Dues of Poseidon and the Gods, to bind
Victims and garlands duly ; bringing cakes
Broken with holy rite. This is it makes
Their virtue smile on us.

PELOPS. Thou art complete
In all best practice. Go now, take thy seat
Across the back of one of our young steeds,
Brought to thy management, fresh from the meads,
As every day shall one or another come
Up from the meadows, under masterdom
Of bit and rein. My son Chrysippus, break
Our pastured fillies to the curb. I make
A true boast, not an empty vaunt, no jade
Never so hot and stubborn, as dismayed
The heart of our best drovers to bring under
The yoke or bridle, but, in awe and wonder

PELOPS

Of thy correction, ambles quietly—Ay,
This is the truth I tell, and not a lie—
Bestrid by thee.

CHRYSIPPUS. I go ; but, first, breathe vow
Unto Poseidon, that he help me now
To tame these young beasts, when I am astride.

PELOPS. Good luck !

(Exit, into palace.)

CHRYSIPPUS. O Cynthia, my mother's Guide,
Great Name, Thou Wardress of all nymphs : and then,
Apollo, friendly guard of fold and pen :
Poseidon, also, lord of foal and colt,
Speed me ; and thou God of the Thunderbolt !

CHORUS. Let us obscure our shape celestial
And seem as handmaidens terrestrial,
Such as Chrysippus knows in daily task
About his father's courts. Wear we a mask
Deceptive of our semblance, for a while,
Sisters, as we nymphs use, when we beguile
Mortals in speech, not showing what we are.
High Prince, we bless thy steps, early stir,

CHRYSIPPUS. Good girls, who, as I take it, press the
cheese
Curdled upon our farms ; and rob the bees

CHRYSIPPUS

Of honey to commingle with our wine,
Give you good morrow.

CHORUS. List, ere the milch kine
Come homeward lowing, with great udders full,
That call me to the pail and milking stool.

Than Chrysippus clad in the wind,
When he runs, or when he leaps,
Or dances and the measure keeps,
Not more agile the hunted hind.

Sweet is the voice of youth,
When the chin is smooth,
And the dance and song are more than the feast ;
And Silenus is held of Gods the least ;
Eros is abroad, nor laughter hath ceased.
Yet blooms untimely blown
Oftest from the stalk are strown.
Spring hail, or the later frost
Many a blossom hath cost.

The hours, nowise dumb,
Call the years to come ;
The hills are vocal ; the wind in the rocks
Is as a flute-player ; and the flocks
Are lambing. But shall the leveret play with the fox ?
A fool were he that dreamt
The sapling is exempt
From bill-hook ; or the woodman's strokes
Fell only timbered oaks.

PELOPS

Damsels we, yet aim aright.
Ponder the burden of Niobe—
Thy father's only sister she—
Lo ! in a watch of the night,
Ere matin light,
Daughters and sons lay dead at her knee.

Fullest sail not always wins ;
Boasting had Niobe made her boast,
Lovelier that holocaust
Than are Latona's twins.
Thus Niobe sins.
Thus is Niobe's offspring lost.

CHRYSIPPUS. Lo, even as ye sing, my sight ye cleanse.
I know you now for nymphs ; no handmaidens,
Ye are a band of those ærial powers
My mother was of.

CHORUS. No narrower life is ours,
Young tamer of horses.

CHRYSIPPUS. Wish me a happy day !

CHORUS. Let none tempt fortune further than he may.

CHRYSIPPUS. Cheerfulness lifts my head to no revolt.

CHORUS. Those that fly high shall see their feathers
moult.

CHRYSIPPUS. Ye nymphs, why cross me so unluckily ?

CHRYSIPPUS

CHORUS. Because we love thee. See, what men draw
nigh.

CHRYSIPPUS. Lo, Atreus and Thyestes, my two
brothers!

CHORUS. One sire ye claim, though sprung of different
mothers.

(Enter, from the fields, ATREUS and THYESTES.)

CHRYSIPPUS. Sons of Pelops, our sire is in the house.

ATREUS. We are the seed of King CEnomaüs.

At our grandfather's tomb we pour out wine,

Even now.

CHRYSIPPUS. The hero is become divine
In memory and years.

ATREUS. Therefore we do
The solemn rites appertinent.

CHRYSIPPUS. To you,
Not to another, it first and last belongs.

ATREUS. Methinks you make a pastime of our wrongs.

Wherefore not to another? Yea, to all

Is not the reverend service sepulchral

A crying and insistent piety?

Seeing the prince our grandsire had in fee

This goodly polity and state now swayed

Even by thy sire and ours, Pelops who made

PELOPS

Olympia famous—infamous, I think ;
And gave it thee for portion ? Will fate wink
At thy enjoyment in the fruit of time,
When in reversion thou succeedest him
Our father, in the chair of Pisa set,
Thou of the nymphs the boasted favourite ?
Ænomaüs claims heroic rites, I wot.

CHRYSIPPUS. Brother, no part have I in language hot.
There is enough of anger, wrongs, and wrath
Remembered here. Cannot we, Atreus, swathe
Our envies decently in cerement bands
And, burning hate to ashes, with our hands
Consign all unto a forgetful urn ?
I bear no spite toward you.

ATREUS. Dost thou not spurn
Our elder foreheads with thy younger feet ?
No ?

CHRYSIPPUS. No, my brother.

ATREUS. Is the food we eat
Not bitter with abasement ? Oh, I scorn
My profligate tongue for saying thou wast born
In any wedlock which my father owns.
Yet thou art his Beloved. May the bones
Of all my ancestors cry out on me,
If I rehearse Atreus' indignity,

CHRYSIPPUS

For man or woman to commiserate
My fortune !

CHRYSIPPUS. Brother mine, your wrongs are great.
I cannot salve your hurts, in oily phrase
Nor flattery ; nor, less, your rancour praise.
Gird not against great Pelops. If, in lapse
Of life and time, I come to power, perhaps,
Cause will be none to curse me. By your leave,
I quit your company.

(Exit, toward the fields.)

ATREUS. Chrysippus, give
Thy best endeavours to keep quit. But still,
We thy half-brothers bear thee no good will ;
To purchase which, it rather were thy part
To render back the greatness which thou art.

(Exit, with THYESTES.)

CHORUS. Chrysippus, I dwell
With rapture of eyes on thy face.
Pray all be well,
Sweet lord of the chariot-race !

Oh, how shall we say
The thing that is uppermost
Within us ? Away,
Away, before thou art lost !

PELOPS

Thy father, in love,
Hath girdled thee round about ;
And set thee above
Thy brethren, as with a shout.

In narrowest strait
Of envy art thou, young Prince ;
In peril of hate
And hatred begun long since.

Thy loveliness rare
Is lovely as Ganymede.
Beware, beware,
Sweet lord of the mounted steed !

For God and man
Are envious of thee.
Oh, Pallas and Pan
And Artemis keep thee for me !

Hippodamia cometh ; hist, hist !
Curl we about us ambrosial mist,
To hide ourselves as we list.
Nymphs, in our dancing, cluster near ;
Hollow the hand behind the ear,
Invisible we, to hear.
Therein is cunning of craft that entraps
Thyestes or Atreus in speech, perhaps.
The Gods hold fate in their laps.

CHRYSIPPUS

(*Enter HIPPODAMIA, ATREUS and THYESTES.*)

HIPPODAMIA. Sons of lost joy, ye meet me in the way
Of my despised feet : what will ye say ?
O my sons, I am Hippodamia, once known
As a king's daughter ; later, looked upon
As queen, the bride of Pelops ; now, at last,
My matrimonial honours overcast,
The beams withdrawn which shone on them and made
Them visible, what am I ? And ye are weighed—
Weighed and found wanting, O my sons, because,
My sons, I am so much less than I was.
But now, the new queen, Danaïs, is fled
Unto aërial regions overhead
To haunt the wind ; being of such a mould
As scorneth union with a mate grown old.
It goes hard, but I shall my prime restore ;
And place my children where they stood before.
Ye were grown men ere yet her lad did teethe.

ATREUS. If he were from the air, then might we breathe !
The usurper Dirce, on the Bœotian plain,
Dirce hath paid her score, in terror and pain,
For the like inroad on a household circle
As Danaïs and Chrysippus make.

HIPPODAMIA.

Now sparkle

PELOPS

Your eyes with menace. That is not my way ;
But on the king to re-impose my sway,
Now that he is deserted.

ATREUS. Yet the scion
Of Thebes, our father's brother-in-law Amphion
Avenge'd his mother's wrongs, when unto ground
Bœotian he came home ; and Dirce bound
Upon a wild bull's back, turning the brute
Loose ; and it bore her on, mocking pursuit,
Unto some death or other, gored, or rolled
Under it.

HIPPODAMIA. So the tragedy is told.
But I remember too well how it looks
To see blood pouring out in roseate brooks,
Painting the sod. Let young Chrysippus be.
I know ye point to him. What an if he
Be handseled to the kingdom? You shall reign
In better glory, as ye are of the strain
Of royal Pisa older than he is.
And thou, Thyestes, gentle Thyestes,
Raise not your hand in mischief that would singe
All of us.

ATREUS. Will our mother bid us cringe?
Amphion and his brother Zethus, I say,
Did well in dooming Dirce. Come what may,

CHRYSIPPUS

Thou shalt no longer sit among the ashes.
There shall arise a fury such as gnashes
Her teeth on proud men.

HIPPODAMIA. Verily there shall.

But take heed lest upon thy flank she fall,
And not upon our enemy's. Oh, leave
This our new garment to my hands to weave.
Now let your father find me here alone.
What may not I, now Danaïs is gone ?
What will I not ?

ATREUS. If use of words succeed
Where action fails, it is a woman's deed,
And not a man's. Then, mother, will we hence.

CHORUS. Long may their stoutness call Chrysippus prince !

HIPPODAMIA. Rashness of speech oft sells us to our foe.
Beguile the time what way ye will, but go,
Hunt, sport, race !

ATREUS. Our grandfather who begat
Pelops, at the Olympian table sat ;
Whence, filching nectar and ambrosia, he
Regaled his friends at home therewith ; while we,
We his descendants eat our victuals as
On sufferance, what so our ancestor was.
But, docile, I must pass the time of day,
Most like a farmer's urchin.

PELOPS

HIPPODAMIA. Keep away.
Lo, I have lived longer than ye ; when pain
Stings me, I do not start.

ATREUS. We seek the plain.

(*Exit with THYESTES, toward the fields. Exit
HIPPODAMIA, into the palace.*)

CHORUS. A snaffle for the steed ;
A hook in the nose of a bull ;
Mænads the panthers lead
When they are fed and full ;
Pits for wolves to be caught ;
But a gag for the froward mind,
Or trammels for envious thought,
Who shall find ?

Anger hath bloodshot sight.
Envy blinks at the light ;
Not rejoicing in sunshine.
Rather the jolly beams
Darken Envy's dreams,
Who doth at good alone repine.

By how much neighbours get,
By so much Envy's fret ;
Envy keeps no holidays.
She gnaws her nether lip ;
And nimbly plaits her whip.
She lies awake of nights always.

CHRYSIPPUS

Thyestes, hold it sin
To gird at what men win,
 Counting as loss a brother's gain.
Atreus, change thy mind.
Oh, cast such thoughts behind
 Your backs, ye noble brethren twain.

For pity's sake, disuse
Your rancours. Nor refuse
 What to graciousness belongs,
Diligent though thou art,
Atreus, to set apart
 A payment against debited wrongs.

Atreus, live and let live ;
Always vindictive, give
 Pause, at least, to cruel spleen.
For certain it is not
Chrysippus hath hatched plot ;
 Nor yet your foe at all hath been.

Forbid your fangs to bite ;
Put up your currish spite,
 Ye sons of Pelops, to have found
Younger feet in your place ;
Howbeit, ye would grace
 No worse, as ye suppose, the ground.

PELOPS

Sure, it belongeth to the Gods
Even to lay flat
The lofty man, for whom their rods
Are kept, whose pride grows fat ;
Surely, Chrysippus cannot vex
Nor Gods, nor none ;
For he is modest as our sex,
And liberal as his own.

(Re-enter, from the palace, HIPPODAMIA.)

HIPPODAMIA. I am more noble than the nymph ; my
merit

Exceedeth hers, by constancy of spirit,
Not to be mitigated by the mood
That ruleth Pelops. In dethronement rude,
My love weareth not out ; while Danaïs,
Being satiated, wearieeth of bliss.

CHORUS. Sisters of Danaïs, lie we, as beggars prone
In supplication, on the threshold thrown.
Stretch we our hands as folk bespeaking food,
Or a cup of water, in solicitude.

HIPPODAMIA. Lend me thy girdle, O Aphrodite, given
Unto young brides ; give me the holy leaven
That works into a husband's blood with power
To buy him for his wife, more than the dower
Of spice or oxen, silver, gold or brass

CHRYSIPPUS

She brings to him, even when she doth pass
Out of her father's family to his.
The love that was, now let me say, it is,
From Pelops meward ! yet far heavier grown
Even with fruit. These sons which are our own
Shall the supplanter roundly soon supplant.

CHORUS. Princess, ere we beg thee to feed our want,
Say, what fair land and palace this.

HIPPODAMIA. Alas !
All was Queen Hippodamia's when time was !
Strangers ye are, I see. Our home hath room.

CHORUS. Wayfarers to your kindly hearth we come.

HIPPODAMIA. Then ask nor answer question till ye
eat.

About our doors, find, every one, a seat.

CHORUS. Thou art the lady of the house so great
In wealth and fortune ?

HIPPODAMIA. Scarce ye hit my state.
No, mock me not ; these weeds are not like hers
Who lords it here over her servitors.
But, daughters, let your blessing be upon
Your shelter : it deserves your benison.

CHORUS. Behold now, I will shape my loves and
hates

According, as a servant in these gates ;

PELOPS

A beggar's blessing and a beggar's curse
Each way I breathe, for better or for worse ;
A benison on this country's friendships be :
A malison upon its foes, from me !

HIPPODAMIA. On friend and foe, send thy words true !

CHORUS. I mean,
Chrysippus friend ; thou enemy, O Queen !

HIPPODAMIA. Scarcely I pierce the sense, but I
begin,

Beneath fair show, to see thy guile within.

CHORUS. Behold now, thou hast blessed thine enemy
first ;

And, in the same breath, thine own head hast cursed.

HIPPODAMIA. Tricksters, I know you now ; and my
blear eyes

Declare you Danaïs' sisters in disguise.

I start unqueenly, as within I felt

Lightning ; and under me my sinews melt.

I know ye hate me. Yet I look to thwart

Ill-will, and lay your spite of every sort.

Why should ye scatter the ashes of Hippodamia's life ?

Am I not as a brand burnt through, that hath fed the fire

And nourished the flame ? And now, when the spark is near
to expire,

Passing upward in smoke, when the tamed and patient wife

CHRYSIPPUS

Sits her down in her sorrow, in the place of this wasted
strife,

Why will ye blow on the embers, and kindle again desire
Of cruel vengeance? Have I called upon Pelops the dire
Harpies that punish a wife's divorce? My neck is not
stiff,

Guilt, not Pelops, condemns me !

(CHRYSIPPUS' outcry heard faintly afar off.)

Hark ! Hark ! The cry of a bird
Was it? Borne from the fields ; the scream of a bird of
prey ?

Nothing follows. It was a fancy ; a wind that stirred.
Nay, if a wind, a harpy ! But ye heard nothing, ye say ?
I caught the fall of an echo ! Oh, what if the harpies gird
Their wings around their inhuman faces, and beat this
way ?

CHORUS. To the fields, an thou wilt, as huntress busked
for the chase,

Hippodamia ; see what feet are in the net ;
Who are taken in the springe that their own craft set.
Peradventure, thou hearest avenging Gods that brace
Their majesties to chasten, who lower with darkened face
On the face of thy children. Chrysippus will prove your
nayword yet

Sisters, Thyestes and Atreus are in council met,
Whose anger shall do homage to him ; and themselves give
place.

PELOPS

HIPPODAMIA. Wherefore use ye so many words ; have I
need of them ?
Is it good I triumph on you ; or good ye triumph on me ?
Lay it to heart, ye sisters, what voices of warning stem
Highways of the supple air. I am your enemy,
As ye are mine ; yet, beseech you, join me in stratagem,
O sisters of Danaïs, to stifle mutiny.

(Re-enter, from the fields, ATREUS and THYESTES.)

ATREUS. Our mother's accents !

HIPPODAMIA. What, my Atreus ? What ?
Thyestes, too ? back, and I heard you not ?
Sons, ye look haughtily.

ATREUS. And we have cause.
Oh, while I speak, listen, and stand at pause ;
Then answer, mother, whether thou be not even
With Danaïs. Nor count our manhood craven.

HIPPODAMIA. I count thee not craven ; and, yet
again,
I would thou tookest wrong in humbler vein.
But what hath happened ?

ATREUS. Mother, what wouldst thou ?
Should we be slaves, and drive our master's plough ?

HIPPODAMIA. Make friends of evil times ; that thou
mayst live
To pay thine enemies in the coin they give.

CHRYSIPPUS

But here is danger lurking underneath.
Looketh it toward my step-son?

ATREUS.

In a breath,

We had not parted, mother mine, so far
As a spear's cast from this where now we are,
When there rode up Chrysippus, with the curb
Fresh in a raw colt's mouth, green from the herb ;
Whose bravery, because he lorded it
With such a god-like manage of the bit,
Enraged me and my brother, to perceive
One flourish in our smarts. It made me grieve
At heart. I, than Thyestes less in sloth,
Less disciplined than he, or else more wroth,
Picked up a good sized stone : and, crying out,
" Brother me no brother ! " even with the shout,
Hurled it at the nymph's son who rode so high.
It took him on the shoulder ; and, well nigh
Under the beast, he pitched upon the ground,
Head-first ; while the wild horse was off at a bound,
Kicking his brow at parting.

HIPPODAMIA.

Son, my son,

What hast thou done, alas ; what hast thou done ?

ATREUS. Upon the green, as on a soldier's bed,

We left Chrysippus lifeless.

HIPPODAMIA.

Is he dead?

PELOPS

ATREUS. One cry he gave—surely ye heard it here—
Racking the welkin with a voice of fear.
Then both of us, my brother and I, beat out
Remaining life ; nor left his death in doubt.

HIPPODAMIA. Zeus and the Gods on high ! Too
much is said.

And speak ye lower ; for I know and dread
These women what they are. Work have ye wrought
Like the homicidal dowry that I brought !
Ye left him there, nor under covert drew ?
All passers by the body have in view ?

ATREUS. Him I had so left, glorying in his death.
Thyestes was more timorous.

HIPPODAMIA. Bate your breath.
Oh, chiefly I would have you walk with care,
And speak with heed ! This company beware !

ATREUS. Who are these idle women ? Let them be.
They cannot bring the dead to life. For we—
Thyestes urging it were best to smother
And stow away how we had served this brother—
Flung him into the bottom of a well
That yawns for water where no water fell
Since our last rains. Under the dusty grass
His body lies. Thus cometh it to pass,
Chrysippus shall not rule in Pelops' stead ;

CHRYSIPPUS

Save Danaïs and her nymphs can raise the dead.

Hearest not ?

HIPPODAMIA. Yea ; my senses are not blunt.

ATREUS. Mother, we come not empty from the hunt.

HIPPODAMIA. There is a mound fast by the palace
raised

Where a great king lies low. I am amazed
To think how lightly such another heap
Ye have made needful, where more eyes will weep,
When men have found what find perforce they must,
Chrysippus also lying in the dust,
Whence Pelops shall uplift him.

ATREUS. Better so.

In all this case, have we a cause of woe
That thou wilt weep for, and not more rejoice ?
And yet I know the young man's youth was choice.

HIPPODAMIA. Sons, ye have wrought folly. Harken
to me ;

Exile yourselves till there be calm ; and flee
Your home and country. It was once my chance
To wither under an untempered glance
And ardour of Pelops' remorseless eye,
That penetrated me, tearless and dry.
I will to Midia, putting leagues betwixt
Him and me, ere my spirit be transfixt

PELOPS

With such another look ; such fits of fear,
Remembering it, my understanding sear
With red-hot branding irons. I will go
To Midia, tempting not a second blow.

ATREUS. Mother, stay here, and brave it out. The
worst

Cannot be made worse. Put our good cause first,
Thy terror last. Dear mother, stand your ground.

HIPPODAMIA. Children, here is another murderous
wound :

A second crime upon my old crime packed :
Chrysippus on CEnomaüs. Oh, I am racked
Joint from joint ! I am racked from wrist to heel !
Now, out of sight, let Hippodamia steal.
I will draw my effects together. What course
Belongs to you, determine it. Remorse
Whelms me that ye have gone about to call
That curse of Myrtilus down on us all.
Better it were to suffer ; what we had
Was bearable at least, however bad.
The guest of strangers, I will lodge abroad,
If any dwelling may be my abode.
But as for you, if habitable spot
Be any where at all, accept it.

ATREUS.

What ?

CHRYSIPPUS

Forego to see my father how he takes
The news of slaughter done for all our sakes,
Mine, thine and ours? Thyestes shall endure
To stand with me ; in hiding thou secure,
Safe in Argolic Midia, if thou wilt,
Thy person keep. I disallow my guilt.
Rather I hold a first-born son in scorn
To be supplanted by one younger-born.
Of goods not mine covetous I am not.
I covet my hereditary lot.

HIPPODAMIA. If ye will both run into peril, you
Can my wing shelter? Nay, perhaps, I drew
Redoubled stripes from Pelops. Help us then,
Olympian Zeus, father of Gods and men,
Or Lord Poseidon ! Over-long I crouch
Next Pelops, ousted from the royal couch
To an inferior bed. Pisa, farewell.
I mind me of the day CEnomaüs fell.
Although the past is dead, it never sleeps.

CHORUS. That hand which sowed the wind the
whirlwind reaps.

HIPPODAMIA. Pelops may offer up us on the tomb
Of dead Chrysippus perished in full bloom,
In thought to pacify, with bloody fees
Paid down, the strictness of the Erinies.

PELOPS

ATREUS. True. None can measure, no, nor take on trust,
What the fell son of Tantalus will count just.

HIPPODAMIA. That which he deemeth right, that will he do ;
Although it pierce his very bosom through ;
So bitter is the seed of judgment sown
Within his heart.

ATREUS. Before his hand come down,
Seize the occasion ; and forsake this door.

CHORUS. Thy adversaries, we desire no more.

ATREUS. Collect thy necessities, as needs must.
Thy sons will speed thee forth.

HIPPODAMIA. The Gods are just,
Perhaps ; when, mid the splintered heap, I knelt,
With my dead father in my lap, I felt
This latter consequence coming apace
With future tread, to drive me from this place.
To me be Midia foster-nurse and fold !

(Exit, with ATREUS and THYESTES.)

CHORUS. Chrysippus in the well lies mould to mould.

Wail, wail, wail !
He was the balm of the gale ;
He was the light of the sky ;
He was the light of the eye !

CHRYSIPPUS

Weep, weep, weep !
He was the salt of the deep ;
Bravest among the brave ;
Honey-sweet for the grave !

Mourn, ah, mourn.
Over Charon's bourne
Is Chrysippus fled,
Unto Elysian bed !

Wring sad hands ;
He was the hope of our lands.
Sisters of Danaïs, veil
Eyelids, and wail, oh, wail !

Our playmate
Surely lieth late.
By his boyish side
Lieth never a bride.

He takes rest.
Beat upon the breast,
Mourners ; mourners, cry,
Woe is me ! and sigh !

(Re-enter, from the palace, PELOPS.)

PELOPS. Sobs, lamentations, and a dolorous noise
I hear. Ye seem in nowise full of joys.

PELOPS

If, whatso women ye are, before my throne
Ye show your wrongs, I make your wrongs mine own.
Yet hear ye this—before I do you right
In anywise, which were my best delight—
Know that I am, within the house, beset
By trouble of sudden thought. I know not yet
What dire disturbance, so that my limbs quake,
Impels me. I dream not, but am awake.
From Phrygia fled, when hither I came first,
There was a well whereat I slaked my thirst.
Thither, as by the gadfly driven, I go,
Causeless ; and therein for a fool must shew.
Close at my elbow, see I, clear as day,
Danaïs, her locks in mourning shorn away ;
Who beckons me, and shows as who should grieve.

CHORUS. No wenches we as erst we made believe ;
Now seem we time-worn bondswomen whose lives
Wear to a close, old drudges, thrifty wives
Who make provision in the hall go far,
From day to day. So, Pelops, deem we are :
We are thy aged servants, full of cares,
Who ply distaff and loom within ; our hairs
Wax gray and scanty, and our bodies, bowed
Under our years, are bent as by a load ;
Or so it seems.

CHRYSIPPUS

PELOPS. Ye ancient spinsters, make
Your intent known to me, if your will is to break
Silence ; my ear is patient towards you.

CHORUS. Sire,
My lip quakes less with palsy than with fire.

Truth lies in a well ;
Treasure in the mine.
Where men cool the wine,
There the dead go down unto the asphodel !

Where the grape is cooled,
Buried in great jars ;
Marbles and jaspers
Also are dug thence. So are star-gazers fooled.

Look into the earth ;
Dive into the clay ;
Search the clueless way
Scratched by rat and mole, to find out things of worth.

Count thy every flock ;
Tell a faithful tale.
Doth no lambkin fail ?
None of all whereof a shepherd should take stock ?

View thy cities. Which
Hath her acropolis
Full of defence? I wis
There is one that crumbles down into the ditch.

PELOPS

Count thy household twice.
Every living soul,
Poll him by the poll.
Heedfully go call the muster over thrice.

Where thou covetest gains,
When that thou hast thrust
Both hands into the dust,
Handfuls of mere dust alone will mock thy pains.

PELOPS. A knotty problem posed, and hard to solve !
Unpick your meaning.

CHORUS. We have bidden thee delve.
Go to that well-head which is in the field—
A waterless well in Summer.

PELOPS. At which I kneeled
And drank, first come to Pisa ?

CHORUS. Where is thy son ?

PELOPS. Which of them all ? Have I no more but
one ?

CHORUS. In all existence, who knows what he hath,
Or hath not ? What possessions are in Death ?
Go to the well-head ; though the spring be sealed,
Let down and draw—the well-head in the field
Yonder.

PELOPS. It lies not far off whence we stand.

CHORUS. O mighty Pelops, take this thing in hand.

CHRYSIPPUS

PELOPS. Ye bade me count my wealth.

CHORUS. I bid thee prove
All thine abundance. Can our words not move ?

PELOPS. How strange the manner of your speech ;
and more,
Your gestures.

CHORUS. O great King, set on before !
Go, Pelops ; as to execution, go !

PELOPS. Behold ye are Goddesses ; behold, I know
That ye are Nymphs ! To the well's mouth I haste.
Where is my son ? What liquor shall I taste ?
It cannot be, on a fool's errand sent,
That I am mocked of you. Chrysippus went
From me, but now. I follow.

CHORUS. Dark and blind
Chrysippus' path, although not hard to find.
(*Exit PELOPS, toward the field.*)

Whither, O Zeus,
Unto what end or use,
Aim or profit or plan
Marshalled, or left to chance
Or sport of circumstance,
Journeys wayfaring man ?
Innocent blood
Let from the brave and good
Runs to waste, as it ran

PELOPS

Like water poured away,
To-day, as yesterday,
 Since the world began.

Hyacinth slain,
Giving vermilion stain
 Unto his namesake flower,
Fell, in no bold exploit,
But by Apollo's quoit
 Cast in an evil hour.
Beauty and joy,
With the beloved boy,
 One death did devour.
So, too, the Cyprian
Laid out Adonis wan,
 Within her amorous bower.

Are the great Gods—
Whose head-shakes and nods
 Nymphs as we are await,
Hanging on the words—
Such impotent Lords
 Of the world's estate?
Myrtilus drowned—
Whom his father found
 Under water, and straight
Carried up to the stars—
Uttered a curse that mars
 Pelops, early or late.

CHRYSIPPUS

Longer ago,
Tantalus, also,
Left an heritage.
Good and evil arise,
Wax, and fertilise,
Rot, and leave lineage.
Wherefore? we ask.
Poets for ever task
Destiny ; seer and sage
Question ; philosopher
Answers with no answer.
Oh ! for the prophet's rage !

Sisters, were there not crimes,
In Lemnos, Thebes and Crete,
Done in cold blood, done in the heat,
Like as did unseat
Kronos in early times ?
As the Olympian,
Firm in his place, out-lives the ban,
Maybe so is it with man.

Well me befall, as I grant
The Gods are of placid mind,
Greater than thought, large as the wind,
Bolder than mankind,
Steadfast as adamant.
Be not our censure loud,
Hasty, variable nor proud.
Only good vows be vowed.

PELOPS

(Re-enter, from the fields, PELOPS.)

PELOPS. Mourn with me, Nymphs ; throw dust into
the air ;

Beat your breasts ! I went down into the lair
Ye bade me search ; and, stretched upon the sand,
Lovely Chrysippus lay. Accursed hand
That laid him low, that laid his head so low !
He never set his face against the foe
In battle yet ; still had he well become
The war-chariot, better than to fall dumb
Without a stroke. Lo, his disfigured skin
Speaks godless violence. Ye Nymphs, begin
Fresh wailing for Chrysippus.

CHORUS. Mute, oh, mute
Chrysippus lieth, as a goodly fruit
Fallen untimely from the tree of life.

PELOPS. Anon, he stirred and was, for sure, at strife
To utter speech ; but soon sank back ; and moans
Were all the profit. When, with failing tones,
He named his brethren, those not loving names.
I clasped him tenderly.

CHORUS. My quick thought aims
Fairly at what he half began.

PELOPS. Too true——

CHRYSIPPUS

CHORUS. It was Thyestes ?

PELOPS. Atreus as well ; those two
Boarhounds, boarhounds or wild boars, pulled him down,
Unmanly, and at unawares.

CHORUS. Drown, drown,
Drown we our eyes, in tears. But, O King, say,
Lord Pelops, I am fain to learn what way
Found he to teach you this ? Is he alive ?

PELOPS. He is as dead as death. He did revive
Only to murmur so much and no more :
To give the names of those who spilt his gore
Out of his true heart and his noble veins.
It was his brethren. Nothing now remains
Before his burials—which I shall make
Remembered in their glory, for the sake
Of Danaïs and his own—but to drive out
Both Atreus and Thyestes. Can I doubt
Their mother Hippodamia laid them on ?
A heavy sentence to myself, and one
A husband ill befits, on her I pass
And execute. Chrysippus, out alas !
Thou shalt have justice terrible !

PELOPS

(*Re-enter* ATREUS and THYESTES.)

ATREUS. Sire, thy hate
Pour out on us alone, to expiate
This righteous killing, as I deem it was.
Thou dost deny our birth-right, and thy laws
Undergo derogation, this denied.
As for our mother, think not to provide
For her ; with good provision she is gone
Out of your dreadful reach.

PELOPS. You look upon
My face, your father's face, blood on your hands ?
Ye drive the Gods hence, and pollute our lands,
If ye remain within our borders. What ?
Say, is CEnomaüs' daughter fled ? as not
In countenance to face the certain doom
That, after I have found her crime, must come
Upon her head ?

ATREUS. She hath made safe retreat,
As wisdom was. Are we not fools, to meet
Thy dispensations in thine own cause fierce ?

PELOPS. Is not mine eye impartial set, to pierce
Illusions that arise out of the heart
And liver of a man ? My skill shall part
Good and evil, not by a thought to turn

CHRYSIPPUS

The scales of justice ; though my reins do yearn
Towards Hippodamia.

ATREUS. She is fled abroad ;
Wiser than we.

PELOPS. I will be as a God
Just to you also. Furiously my hate
Is hot ; but it shall cool. I will not sate
Anger, but punishment upon you. Speed,
Atreus, and sullen Thyestes, for indeed
Thou speakest no word. I exile you. Profane
The soil no more.

ATREUS. We have Chrysippus slain ;
And with bowed head, but a consenting heart
Unto his death, Thyestes, we depart,
We brothers.

PELOPS. Brotherhood, confirmed in sin,
Makes bondage of the kindly tie of kin.
Ye herd together, sons ; but learn, in time,
The uncompanionable force of crime.

THYESTES. Though exile be burdensome, I take up
The burden to have done this thing.

CHORUS. Our cup,
Chrysippus, for thee, brims over ; not with joy.

PELOPS. Purify the land.

(Exeunt, toward the fields, ATREUS and THYESTES.)

PELOPS

I go unto my boy.

Twixt wrath and law it is a man's to choose,
Knowing his mind ; lest we distinction lose
In fury. May I fill the judgment chair
As Rhadamanthus and as Minos ! Care
Shall on my locks be for a crown of state.
But lowly on my murdered boy I wait.

*(Enter, from the fields, ATTENDANTS with the dead
body of CHRYSIPPUS.)*

CHORUS. Woeful spoils are brought by yon stalwart
four.

PELOPS. Prepare the bath, wash off the clotted gore.
Thy mother, O Chrysippus, will not reave
One tress of the honours of her head, to leave
Upon thy tomb. But I, a childless root,
Remember the lost, yea, and the living, to boot.
Clamorous outcry I forbid my lips.

*(Exit, into the palace, with ATTENDANTS carrying the
dead body.)*

CHORUS. Mortality no living creature skips !

Sisters, draw near
And, with the frequent tear,
Cry, Woe for Chrysippus our joy and our nephew dear !

CHRYSIPPUS

Wash his body of the soil ;
Cleanse his limbs with loving toil ;
Comb his locks back from his eyes.
Beardless as a maiden lies
Our Chrysippus. Clip we our long hair, coil by coil !

Glory hath not brought him scars ;
Nor success hath crowned his years.
Ashen lips and motionless
Calm virginity express.
Minos yet shall find him peerless mid his peers.

Mortals the Gods love die young.
Often is the adage sung ;
Oft inscribed within a book
Sagely. Yet I cannot look
On Chrysippus dead, but that my heart is wrung.

Sink his grave ; and hew a tomb,
Like a bed within a room.
Let him keep his bow and spear,
Bread and wine, with horseman's gear,
Lying in such state as heroes dead assume.

Who is left to follow Pelops in the land ?
Who will do the rites when Pelops comes to die ?
Who shall keep his goods together ? Who shall stand
Near him bye and bye ?

PELOPS

Danaïs and we her sisters, who so long
Watch these mortal burghers how they store or spend,
Turn our backs on them and theirs at last Most strong
Fate controls the end.

(*Exeunt.*)

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PELOPS, King of Pisa.

HERACLES.

A MESSENGER.

NIOBE, sister of Pelops, widow of Amphion, King of Thebes.

NIOBE'S MESSENGER.

WOMEN with the ELDERS of PISA.

CHORUS, OF VICTORS IN THE GAMES, crowned with Olive.

The SCENE is laid at Olympia ; before the Tent of
PELOPS.

(Enter CHORUS, and PELOPS from his tent.)

PELOPS. Princes of Greece, Victors of skill declared
By our Olympic judges, ye who have fared
From every city of the Hellenic Name
In friendly rivalry ; and hither came

PELOPS

Together for this purpose, naught besides,
My thanks are yours who wait while care divides
High festival with homely obsequies.

CHORUS. Aged beginner of these new glories
Where general Hellas joins, all men should pay
Dues to the dead.

PELOPS. Friends, every road and way
Of sea and shore hath hither brought some one
Of you. Did no man call himself my son ?
Perhaps not boastful of King Pelops' blood,
But not ashamed ?

CHORUS. Not every realm we trod.

PELOPS. O Sirs, I bring from Midia, where she died,
The corse of Hippodamia, once my bride ;
But we in separation lived for years,
From one another. She fed herself on fears
Of my implacability well proved
In former days, most stern where most I loved.
But now that time and fate have both outrun
Their proper race-course, and that goal is won
We mortals in despite of wishes reach,
I have sent stately embassy to fetch
Her ashes ; and this pillar consecrate
Here in Olympia, to my whilom mate ;
Fencing the petty rood with walls of stone,

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

Wherein she crumbles. Yet me not this alone
Employs, victorious Princes ; far and wide,
Have I sought knowledge of what things betide
My exiled sons, blood-guilty, but by this,
Washed pure. I hear only that awful Dis
Hath them not yet ; but further, hear not aught.
From many diverse regions are ye brought.
Surely from some odd corner ye can give
Some news. If Atreus and Thyestes live,
Say, further, that they live as in eclipse,
Need, beggary ; that trembles on your lips.

CHORUS. Hast thou no dreams nor visions ?

PELOPS.

I await

A crop, now in the blade, but earing late.

(During the Choral Ode, he censes the altars before his tent.)

CHORUS. Heracles, from the bank
Of Ilissus, the olive brought, I thank
Pallas, Attica and that stream !
For the olive and the wild olive, variant yet one, I deem.
Heracles brought a slip,
For our runners prize, or for horsemanship,
Planted on Alpheus' brink,
When he flushed the Augean sink ;
Our foreheads in wisp of green to clip.

PELOPS

Gathered from North and East,
Journeyed from South and West,
We, with a noble zest,
 Hither resort ;
Chieftain and chieftain's son,
Have we, second to none,
Many a tripod won,
 In sacred sport.

Here, at Olympia shrined,
Zeus, keep our health in mind,
Ours who as Victors bind,
 With olive gray,
Our brows. Our good host bless,
Who hath restored no less
Than these high games which dress
 Hellas so gay.

Pelops kind comfort seeks.
Mock him not, noble Greeks ;
Tell him what rumour speaks ;
 What tongues relate.
His messengers abroad
Bring him a heavy load :
So slowly home they plod
 Under the weight.

Speak, thou from Salamis ;
Or thou of Argolis.

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

Cretan, resolve me this ;
What shall we say ?
If we should echo back
Hear-say again, alack,
Fame would be painted black ;
Praise done away !

Horrible tales are told,
Now as in days of old ;
Monsters that will not hold
Sinew to nerve.
If I should fill his ear
With the conflicting fear
Of such cross-mixture drear,
What would it serve ?

Nay, but if whisperers come,
Let them ; yet be we dumb.
Haply, this moment, some
Wayfarer nears.
Question the holy shrine,
Pelops, whose priests divine
Dream and prophetic sign ;
Ask not thy fears.

PELOPS. Soothsayers I detest ; but my right arm
Zeus and Poseidon still have kept from harm.
Themis and Pythian Loxias, O my guests,
Mutter enigmas.

PELOPS

CHORUS. Guide they not thy quests?
Cannot the Delphic God make darkness clear?

PELOPS. I have interrogated, with open ear,
Double-dealing oracles. I still devise
A search that is like Argos in its eyes ;
My fishermen of tidings are a net
Over our isles and continent ; but yet
No more I glean, no further, save Atreus,
After the death of his host Eurystheus,
Steps into a fair kingdom, peaceably
Possessing it even for a royal see,
Golden Mycenæ, building for his gold
Dædalian treasures, his wealth to hold,
Such as Rhipæan gryphons well might keep ;
That in security his care should sleep.
This is well noted ; in rehearsal stale ;
A well-thumbed chronicle and threadbare tale.
Is nothing more vouchsafed ?

CHORUS. Send forth, and know
If still he hold the seat.

PELOPS. I have done so,
By many hands. Knows one of you all wherefore
No certain sign returns? Let me explore
What motive seals your lips lest words escape.

(Enter, in a chariot, with old MEN attendant, NIOBE.)

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

CHORUS. Niobe, or some Goddess in her shape,
Comes. On her queenly head, her locks are turned
Ashy as firewood which the fire hath burned.
Widowed she is : when all her children fell,
Amphion, her royal husband, died as well.
Within her chariot drawn at a foot's pace,
She sits, the queen collateral of thy race.

NIOBE. Pelops ; I am thy sister Niobe.

PELOPS. After these long years, thou art known to me
Even at sight.

NIOBE. From Thebes I wander hither,
Seeking I know not what ; nor know not whither
I trail my weariness.

PELOPS. Thou hast gone far.
If thou canst tell me where my children are,
And what their counsel, what their deeds achieved,
And how accounted of, thou, who hast grieved
So bitterly for children thou hast lost,
Refuse it not my asking.

NIOBE (*alighting*). Dost accost
Niobe ? Niobe is not here at all ;
Only a marble figure that lets fall
The scathing tears that Niobe should shed
For those dear children who shall never wed
Husband nor wife. Seven boys, seven girls, fourteen,

PELOPS

Are perished even as they had not been.
I, the old mother, here survive my young.

CHORUS. We heard it ; as woeful tale as ever sung.
Yet hast thou not a passing breath to spare
Even for thy brother in his grievous care ?
One little word, even amid thy tears ?

NIOBE. Pelops, Pelops, thou knowest me old in years ;
But I am older than my years, in grief.

PELOPS. Niobe, I know thy sorrow past belief.

NIOBE. My haughty boast, proud of my numerous
flowers

Upon one stem, angered those jealous Powers,
Artemis and Apollo, being but twain
Born to Latona whom I did disdain
Even as if she were a sterile tree,
Having but two buds, poor if matched with me
Who bare a garden of fourteen to bloom
Upon Amphion's field. But, lo, my doom
Fell swift and sure ; for one and all, laid low,
Slept the last slumber, by the singing bow
And arrows of those Godheads put to sleep.

PELOPS. Bringst thou no word at all ? Well mayst
thou weep
For ever, for thy sons and daughters laid
Untimely on the sod. But be it not said

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

That Niobe, turned into very stone
By sorrow, knew no trouble but her own ;
But wept herself blind. Sister Niobe,
Bethink thee, what hast thou come forth to see ?
Nothing but the reflection of thy face ?
And iteration of thy own disgrace
Braving the Gods ? Tell me, hast thou not heard,
Peradventure at second hand, or third,
Whisper or hint or obscure slander, say,
Of those who call me father ?

 NIOBE (*remounting her chariot*). Pelops, nay !
I strive only to reach our father's grave,
Tantalus, and to yield the life he gave,
Back to the earth there. With few followers,
And those old men, I seek his tomb and hers
Who gave us life ; there to sit down and weep
For ever, casting my limbs upon a heap,
Ever to lie there like a pile of stones ;
And let the wind perpetuate my moans.
These many years, these many years, I die
Daily ; my fallow cheeks are never dry.
One can live too long.

 PELOPS. Queen of Thebes, my roof
Looks firmer than it may be found in proof.
Amid thy desolation which doth waste

PELOPS

Thy reason, with what cogency thou hast,
Give me assurance, or some far off pledge
My issue still endures to outlast my age.
Of Atreus and Thyestes hearest nought ?

CHORUS. Thy sister is deaf with grief, she is distraught.

(Exit NIOBE, attended.)

PELOPS. My voice would call her back, would that
avail.

CHORUS. Why wilt thou dive into an unknown
tale ?

PELOPS. Happier Niobe, knowing her children dead,
Than possibilities for one's own to dread.
Man is bond-slave to uncertainty. Who knows
How the Gods open life, or how will close ?

CHORUS. Pelops, be strong ; utter no weak complaint
Because of this.

PELOPS. I am not dimmed, nor faint.
It is not to be strong to cheat our hopes
With shallow dreams ; true manhood with truth copes.
The just man standeth up before his fate,
And takes her answer.

CHORUS. To be calm is great

Man mourns ; and cries, " Woes destroy
Universal joy ! "

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

He laughs ; and assumes holiday
Over land and sea.
Oh, for a mind to weigh
Ourselves ! What pygmies are we !

Mites, atoms and grains of sand !
Millet-seed in the hand
Of Fate ; as a sand-grain prized !
Misery conceives
Existence crystallized
To a tear-drop, when she grieves.

So we colour and paint
The atmosphere with our taint ;
Or dye, in rosy tint,
The prospect which, the while,
Surrounds us with no hint
Of real frown or smile.

We read into all we scan
The countenance of man ;
A trick of the mind ; no more
Beyond fanciful figment ; lo !
The landscape doth ignore
Niobe and her woe.

But hear how the children of Zeus,
Pitying, saw the seed
Of the Daughter of Tantalus
Fall and bleed
And die, whom no flesh came to bury,
Nor kindred rose to burn.

PELOPS

For Phœbus and Artemis,
Gathering them they had killed,
Those twin deities
Themselves willed
To do the rites for their hapless quarry ;
And gave them each an urn.

O Pelops, on the road, comes one, with foot
Unwilling and not swift ; one charged to put
Knowledge into thine ears. I see him shape
His journey hither.

(Enter a MESSENGER.)

PELOPS. Man, I bid thee gape
Like Etna : thy unprefaced messages
Throw forth into the air. Thy slackened knees
Are slow in bearing thee ; thy breath more slow
To utter what thy duty must bestow
Upon my burdened ear.

MESSENGER. It is a task
Grievous, to breathe the tale that thou dost ask.
Pelops, I am thy henchman, born and bred
Under thy roof. Forgive, when all is said.
King, I crave pardon, and in humble sort
Confess myself thy wronger who, in short,
Have diligently culled, out of the skein

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

And threads of chance, a clue whose tint is plain
And over simple to the eye

PELOPS. My soul
Is hungry. Give not mouthfuls; but the whole.

CHORUS. Hippodamia's ears are stopped with clay.
She cannot fret, whatever thou dost say.

PELOPS. Be brief; be full; be loyal to the truth.

MESSANGER. Pelops, swear to me, with thy royal
mouth,
Not to reward me according to the rent
That I must needs make in thy soul's content.

CHORUS. Swear so, great 'Tantalus' yet greater heir.

PELOPS. By Zeus, Poseidon and Hades, I swear.

MESSANGER. Most faithfully I canvassed what was
true,
Ere I accepted what at first I drew
Easily from free speech of many. Fain
I had disbelieved it.

PELOPS. Am I one to stain
My honour with wrath poured on harbinger,
For duteous words? Speak without more demur.

MESSANGER. Ruler of Olympia, father of this land,
Atreus is dead, slain by Ægisthus' hand,
Son of Thyestes.

PELOPS. Let me not be shaken

PELOPS

Out of measure, although the heavens blacken
Above. What accident brought this about ?

CHORUS. Smother it as we may, murder will out !

PELOPS. Ye were not ignorant ? Shall I best thank
Your loving kindness toward me ; that ye shrank
From giving me what common knowledge knew,
Whilst I with pain sought it the whole world through ?
Or rather chide you, that ye made so slight
An estimate of me, held me so light
In my behaviour, it were better fill
My vanity with vapour ? Ye did ill.
But now, your history ; what grew between
The brothers ?

MESSENGER. Atreus took to him a queen——

PELOPS. As was most like.

MESSENGER. Thyestes, in excess
Angry, at standing in the kingdom less
Than half at least with Atreus—which was left,
He claimed, by King Eurystheus, to be cleft—
Equalled his brother's interest in the bride ;
And—laying a broad base for fratricide,—
Betrayed his brother. And, scarcely with life,
Escaped the husband's vengeance for the wife.

CHORUS. This was the middle of things.

PELOPS.

We near the end.

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

CHORUS. But shut thine eyes to evils none can mend.
Or, if room be for doubt, let thy man fit
His tongue to certainties ; all else omit.

PELOPS. Unfold ! for I am constant.

CHORUS. Who will deal
The hateful blow ? With tongue more sharp than
steel,
Plunge, in the living bosom of the King,
The scandal that is true ?

MESSENGER. The news I bring,
Let it suffice. Without enquiry why
Or wherefore, learn, Thyestes' child drew nigh
And slew his own uncle, in Thyestes' plea.

PELOPS. The wrong was against Atreus. Can it be
Criminal to be wronged ? Should vengeance fall
Upon the victim ?

CHORUS. Good now, tell him all,
Substance and circumstance.

MESSENGER. Not I.

CHORUS. Nor I.

PELOPS. Ye whet my appetite, and let me die
Starving.

MESSENGER. A famine ate Mycenæ up,
After this matter. And the folk did troop
About the palace, calling on their king,

PELOPS

With lean and hungry sacrifice to wring
An answer from the God, what they should do.

CHORUS. Oh, that false reading of an omen true.

PELOPS. What was the word?

MESSENGER. That Atreus should recall
His peccant brother unto bower and hall.

PELOPS. A cruel oracle.

MESSENGER. It was obeyed.
King Atreus in golden Mycenæ made
A feast, amid want ; and invited home
Thyestes, brotherly.

CHORUS. Hold, and be dumb !
Name not that banquet, and its hideous fare.
Ægisthus slew the host : all the rest, spare !

PELOPS. False friends and comforters, ye under-rate
How like I am to Atlas ; and how great
A burden I can truss. Know that my back
Cannot be broken, howso grievous pack
And lading weigh me down.

CHORUS. Tell the tale out.
He will be felled who makes himself so stout.

MESSENGER. If ye will hear it : in high hall were
met
The brethren ; and, before the prince, was set
A smoking dish prepared by the king himself ;

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

And the host vouched it, saying, Half his pelf
Made not a richer. Royally he placed
The flesh before his brother ; and watched him taste.
Thyestes satisfied his soul with meat
His brother gave.

CHORUS. The sun withdrew his heat
And turned away his light.

PELOPS. Why should this be ?

MESSENGER. Atreus showed to Thyestes, plain to
see

Upon a charger set, the banquet done,
The head of the poor queen's unlawful son,
Whose corse has been his natural father's food,
By Atreus his unnatural uncle stewed.
The head and feet and hands, most piteous,
Were the sole relics of son murdered thus.

PELOPS. The infant child slaughtered, to feed the
sire's
Hunger upon him ? May thy lips be liars !

MESSENGER. I bring sure tokens not to be gainsaid.

PELOPS. Sons of my hearth !

CHORUS. Too clear is truth displayed !

MESSENGER. How to proceed ; recount what slavery
To foulness ; what revenge unsavoury ?
More, worse ?

PELOPS

CHORUS. King Pelops beckons thee aside,
Privately.

MESSENGER. Sire, thy servant fain would hide
Sicker enormities in silence drowned.

PELOPS. I dive : and still the bottom is not found.

MESSENGER. To thy sole ear, O King, pertains the
tale.

PELOPS. Publish it not abroad. Behind this veil,
Give me the aggregate ; on Pelion
Pile Ossa up ; on with thy story ; on.
CEnomaüs and father Tantalus,
Our offspring is accursed after us !

(Exeunt, into tent, PELOPS and MESSENGER.)

CHORUS. Blessed the blindness
That the Gods, in loving-kindness,
Close our eyes withal,
Lest second sight forestall
Experience, in knowledge winning
The end ere the beginning.

Merciful pity
Levels the witless and the witty,
In one ignorance.
So hoodwinked, nor with looks askance,
We play our parts in wholesome savour ;
Nor dread fore-known disfavour.

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

Suffer thy servant,
Perfervid in thy hymns and fervent,
Never to meet half-way
The premonition of decay ;
Spare, O oracular Apollo,
To shew me what shall follow.

Let me be prudent,
As man befits ; no student
Read in Orphic Lines
Prophetic. Ruin entwines
Her victim suddenly. We tremble
Lest our fate his resemble.

Nowise craven
Nor a coward,
I am unnerved
By Pelops' crash untoward.
Arrows oft have swerved,
On the bystander showered :
Spectators of the battle as foeman served.

Look ! if heaven
Ever lowered
On us below,
When Æolus was froward,
Cowering I now
Shudder, overpowered
To hear the winds of destiny how they blow.
Histories, graven

PELOPS

Or in story,
That overflow
With tears and carnage gory,
Famous long ago,
Move me not to be sorry,
As Pelops' agony, whom we see and know.

(Re-enter, from the tent, PELOPS.)

PELOPS. Sins are invented fouler than the swill
Of grunting hogs whereof they take their fill!

CHORUS. Tell me, should not Thyestes' other child
Be hot against the monster who beguiled
A father to such feasting?

PELOPS. It was well,
Making me be a scholar in what befell.
Ægisthus hath slain Atreus.

CHORUS. Very wise
Wast thou, expelling, under alien skies,
Thy savage children borne thee of the strain
Of fierce CEnomaüs.

PELOPS. Yon man's words are plain.
'The bare recital baffles measurement.
I breathe no jot of it, outside the tent;
Lest, like the sight of Gorgon, truth transmute
Mankind to boulders. The irrational brute
Transgresses not so far, as I am made

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

To understand my sons—both of them—wade
In these abominations. Turn away,
If any love me ; hear not what I say.

CHORUS. We know the scurrilous and ribald writ
That runs against these twain.

PELOPS. And have hidden it ?

CHORUS. What had it served to speak, only to
goad
Anxiety with worse ?

PELOPS. O heavy load !
I, very wisely, as your wisdom saith,
Have purged away the plague-spot, with a breath
Of godlike rectitude. Man towers above
Himself, when in such region he dare move
Calmly. There is a venerable mind
Better than mercy, more than love of kind ;
Which shall I not in mine own soul perfect ?

CHORUS. Thou seemest immortal. I thought thee
wrecked ;
And, lo, thou takest horror by the throat
And chokest it !

PELOPS. This is a triumphal note.

CHORUS. Thou dost bewilder us and yet amaze !
Too wonderful for censure or for praise.
Thou hast prevailed on battle-field and mart ;
No marvel, being conqueror of thine heart.

PELOPS

Thou art, to-day, the foremost man in Greece ;
Thou hast made war and, afterwards, made peace ;
Won races, and won cities ; and become
As if a God in power and wisdom ;
Praise be to Zeus and Poseidon !

PELOPS. I am rock
Bedded and iron-bound against the shock
Of flattery. Like a headstone on a heath
I am a landmark showing where is death.
I have made war on Nature, and would mend
Her kindly rule of life : but, in the end,
My justice now recoils on mine own head,
Swung back as outrage lawless. Quick and dead
Conspire, from my sure pedestal, to drag
My bulk. I am a torso ; arm nor leg
Stays me up. Manhood's decency ! My fears
Are chiefly lest ye see a king in tears.
I am the true begetter, I, no other,
Of huge calamity ; Hippodamia the mother ;
CEnomaüs the ancestry I note
Immediate, and Tantalus more remote.

CHORUS. Hear it pronounced ; when a mortal abandons
himself, be it seen
Soon how the Gods give him over to furies and follies
unclean,

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

After the shape of his habits. As bodies of snow that begin
Thundering down from the ridges of Caucasus to the ravine,
Atreus, along with Thyestes, descends, among sins, unto sin.
Infancy was their beginning ; their end was an act to appal
Nature. How easy the passage, the course and the way of a
fall !

These are the things that commend us in life ; neither
olive nor bay :

Resolute trust in the right, through the darkness as well
as by day

Equally : tender compassion on innocence and upon guilt,
When, as in Hippodamia and Pelops, inscrutably they
Mingle together at home in the bosom at once—if thou wilt
Take it, indeed—and a knowledge of when to be silent, in
chief.

Who, with a plummet-line, casting, shall fathom the measure
of grief?

Since the primæval encounter of Kronos with Zeus, on
the hill

Yonder that over against us, a seat of the Titans, is reared,
Never yet hath been recorded in memory burden of ill
Fuller than load of CEnomaüs' household ; nor more to be
feared !

PELOPS. Tantalus ! CEnomaüs !

CHORUS.

As before,

The names well up like tears ; and fall once more.

PELOPS

(*Enter* NIOBE'S MESSENGER.)

See, on the privacy of stately woe,
Some ill-timed stranger, of gait not sure though slow,
Who now surprises us. His antique mien
Seems age personified. Mark ye him lean
Heavily on his staff. Can he be come
From Niobe? Sure he hath made his home
With no young bride.

PELOPS. This may be one I sent
Forth in his youth, now doubled up and bent,
After a life-long search, returned to show
Minuter detail of colossal woe.
Speak, reverend stranger; if thou hast ever been
Young, wast sent forth, a post, youthful and keen,
From Pelops' body-servants, come back cold
And senile? Or art thou a man grown old
In other service?

MESSENGER. Unto thee, O King,
Among these chieftains chief, the word I bring
Belongs. Thy sister Niobe is no more.
'The Gods in kindness froze her to the core,
While setting out unto Mount Sipylus,
'To rest upon your father's tomb.

CHORUS. Even thus
The Immortals quiet Niobe.

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

MESSENGER.

A stone

She, now and for ever after.

PELOPS.

She is gone ;

Dried up and fruitless as a blasted trunk
Of forestry, when the green sap hath sunk.
But my Titanian heart-ache comes more near
Unto me. Fellow, get refreshment.

(*Exit* MESSENGER.)

Here

I meet the vanward and beginning small
Of worse I will not look on.

CHORUS.

Brimstone and gall !

PELOPS. I denied Hippodamia her rites, to shun
This very Nemesis which I have won.
A wrestler against doom, I doom fulfill
Myself.

CHORUS. Thou inheritest the greater ill.
Into a pit that other hands have trenched
Thou fallest. 'Thy resolve hath never blenched
In suffering ; stern on thyself, and stern
On others, bid thy wonted mind return.

PELOPS. Unweeting orgy on begotten flesh !
My father's dish ! horror on horror fresh !
I hoped Chrysippus should succeed Pelops,

PELOPS

And rule mild as Athenian Cecrops.
Atreus is, also, dead.

CHORUS. It is enough ;
Speak no more ; lo, our gentlest were too rough !

PELOPS. To be childless, not the original fount
Of curses, is to be of some account.
But I desire not pity from man born
Of woman ; it is a passion touched with scorn
Of what provokes it.

CHORUS. Vex not Pelops ; law
Judges not him ; bow down the head in awe.

PELOPS. No messmate shares with me ; I stand alone.

CHORUS. In man there is a nobler strength than
stone.
Pain, for it is alive, I estimate
To be more excellent than fronting fate
Insensibly as doth the adamant.

PELOPS. O Tantalus ! O Ænomaüs !

(Exit, into his tent.)

CHORUS. Raise the chant !

Pelops hath got for his hand
Kingdom ; and rules a realm
Wisely to understand
Governing desires and passions as with a helm.

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

We who behold his might,
Worship and lordship, speak
Well of his name, for right
Stablished in power. And yet we behold him troubled and
weak.

Oftenest this have I seen :
Men and women are lost
Even by that they ween
Lucky, and happiest ; by the thing which they buy at a cost.

Error of wisdom is driven
Deeper than folly can sink,
Witless wight is forgiven
Easier far than is carefulest forecast, that slips from the brink.

Sometimes, a fall or a slip
Bringeth a fool to his wits.
Sometimes, the wisest will strip
Prudence off, and wander all naked to pitfalls and pits.

Safeguards avail not a fool.
Nor shall we bulwark the wise.
Under an absolute rule,
Error strikes wisdom and foolishness betwixt the eyes.

Pelops of Tantalus' race
Hippodamia thrust
Out of his bosom ; a space
Cleansing his home ; to bring down his hoary head to the
dust.

PELOPS

None are blinder than those
Wise in their own conceit,
Who, with great toils and throes,
Hoard up pain. Nay, vex not the heroical monarch's feet !

Œdipus, broken in eld,
Hounded from every coast,
His Antigone held
Safe by the hand, until such time as he gave up the ghost.

Daughter hath Pelops none
Like her ; nor child of his loins,
Near him ; daughter nor son.
Stay, my friends, who comes that muscle with heartiness
joins ?

Who is yonder, that wears,
Round his shoulder girt,
Lionskin ? for he bears
Every mark of the son of Zeus who the hydra hurt.

Speak ; for we none have names
Barren of glory. Oh, speak,
Heracles, come to the games
Covetous of prize or of sight-seeing ! What dost thou seek ?

(During the Choric Ode, enter, from the fields, HERACLES.)

HERACLES. Verily I am here in happy case.
Whereas Augeas did me dark disgrace,

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

I have avenged me on his lofty head.
The King of the Epeans lieth dead,
Hard by, in Elis. Once I stood his friend,
And washed the stables clean that did offend
Against his health. For I two rivers drained
Out of their course, at his request ; and gained
The due of his fair promise, in one day
Cleansing the sty. But, finding that I lay
Under Eurystheus' bondage bound to do
No less, Augeas cunningly withdrew
The bartered tenth of all his cattle, mine
Under our pact. But I grieved for the kine.
While tyrannous Eurystheus straight averred
My covenanting for the goodly herd
Disqualified that Labour. But too fast
Augeas fared to market ; for, at last,
Soon as Eurystheus in Mycenæ lay
Dead, I bethought me ; and came back, to slay
Crafty Augeas ready to out-wit
Me, son of Zeus ; but hath repented it.
For I am hot from when I caught him fair,
And took his life. And now it is my care
And my good will, as I go by, to meet
King Pelops, at Olympia where compete,
At this good time and date, such men as ye,

PELOPS

The sons of Gods and heroes. Oh, let me,
Me also sport with you, these limbs to show
That made Peneus and Alpheus flow
Obedient through the filth of thirty year ;
And, in a single day's work, made all clear.
But answer me, ye fortunate whose brows
I see are bound with the victorious boughs,
Where is King Pelops ?

CHORUS. In his tent withdrawn.
Let him sleep on ; no night but ends at dawn.

HERACLES. Darkness, for certain, daybreak often
shatters.

CHORUS. The King is busy upon gravest matters,
Which we respect ; nor trouble him.

HERACLES. Then, no help,
But I will rouse him. Like a lion's whelp,
I am peremptory ; and I little brook
To bide the time of day. Lo, as I shook
The Nemean lion, and then tare his jaws
Open, the tabernacle, where withdraws
King Pelops' majesty, I open wide.
Nor forms nor ceremonies I abide,
Who am, though human born, the son of Zeus.
I search for Pelops without more excuse.

CHORUS. Good now, Alcides, mighty Heracles,

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

There is no dignity in words like these.
Plague of deep sorrow, nay, a pestilence
Of very grief, subdues his every sense.

HERACLES. Why, that is ill. For I am here to-day
To establish the Olympian games for aye ;
Whereon great Pelops' heart we know was set.

CHORUS. Enter his tent, and you will find him. Yet
Make it a gentle entrance. Surely he
Thou visitest, lieth in extremity.

HERACLES. I neither urge my club nor lionskin.
Full softly, as Asclepius, I go in.

(Exit, into the tent, HERACLES.)

CHORUS. As the crushing of grapes, the fermenting of wine,
Is the presence of Heracles mighty of thews,
With the glory upon him of labours ; divine
In his force as a God or to bind or to loose.
Who shall approach him ; or who
Limit his powers to do
Wonders ? Alcestis he led
Back unto life from the dead.

But her husband, Admetus, with welcome and mirth,—
As a treasure of price, as a pearl, as a gift
Of the Gods, as a seed that was hidden in earth,
To return as a shadowy cedar, and lift

PELOPS

Branches of whispering shade ;
Yea, as the fruit of the spade
Set in a garden—his wife
Greeted, so coming to life.

What if Pelops arose in his sorrow, and sat
In the door of his tent, at the entering in
Of the door ? Would the children his body begat
Make him welcome in chorus ? What manner of din
Fell on his ears from the brood
Framed of his frame ? Is it good,
Judged of himself, that he go
Stricken in years, and brought low ?

In the name of the Children of Kronos, I pray
And implore, for the offspring of Tantalus, peace,
As their father shall never enjoy. Far away,
Still the hungers of Tantalus wax and increase
Always. O Heracles, most
Grateful of guests to this coast,
Comfort the hero. Now is
Heart-broken age become his.

WOMEN (*within the tent*). Alas !

CHORUS. That, surely, is the mourners' cry,
Within.

WOMEN (*within*). Alas !

CHORUS. It is their threnody
The women raise.

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

WOMEN (*within*). Alas !

CHORUS. Again it wounds

The silence unto death.

WOMEN (*within*). Alas !

CHORUS. It sounds

Monotonously still.

WOMEN (*within*). Alas, alas,
Alas !

(*Re-enter* HERACLES.)

HERACLES. Glory is brought to a woeful pass !

CHORUS. His children are wormwood to Pelops.

HERACLES. Hark

How women wail within the tent.

CHORUS. We mark.

HERACLES. I had had Pelops, being yet alive,
Hear me tell of Mycenæ, where I have
Danced the babe Agamemnon on my arm,
And dandled Menelaus. I affirm
That they are fat and lusty even as I
When strangling serpents in my infancy ;
Boys to rejoice their grandsire.

CHORUS. He is of mould
Olympian, worthy to be extolled !

HERACLES. Pelops was all this greatness.

PELOPS

CHORUS. Was ; and is not ?
Resolve me, Alcides ; thou wast on the spot.

HERACLES. He lay on fleeces, like a child tired out,
But not with childish play ; wearied, though stout.
Sometime he spoke to me, and framed discourse,
Feeble in breath, though charged with mighty force,
Conversing of his life and godlike aim,
His glorious manhood, and the pride that came
Of executed will. His drowning voice
Scarce, at the close, of words could make her choice.
Whether his heart cracked—so much to withstand—
Or lethal age severed his worn-out strand
Of life, or some one of the Gods on high
Smote him, I leave in question. All must die !
He gathered up his feet into the bed ;
And he is rigid.

CHORUS. Great Pelops is dead ?
Shall we take, each on his divergent way,
This word to Hellas, “ Pelops is dead ” ? Yea ?

HERACLES. Yea.

(Exit HERACLES, into the tent.)

CHORUS. Folds of the tent
Shroud from us the darkness, rent
With voices that lament,
Within the Sidonian curtain pent.

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

When we cast up the total, behold, the chariot-races
Pelops won remain. Nought shall ever divide
Deed from the hero who wrought it. His horses loosen the
traces ;
Lo, his chariot stands empty, as jostled aside !

Who will measure or mete out fate : or say to the Fury,
“ Therefore shalt thou smite ; now shalt thou up and
destroy ” ?
Who shall say the Gods pluck one man down for vain-glory ?
Or this other because freely he lives to enjoy ?

Nay, but who shall forbid his thoughts, when he sees the
avenger
Follow the devious track, year after year, to enforce
Grievous lessons—who asserts that death is a stranger
Unto the past of life ? Death is embodied remorse !

Yet, as touching virtue, the Son of starry Latona
Gives me wit and a word : Constancy goeth before ;
Honour followeth. So the Oracle of Dodona
Wills, whose will is fate, henceforth as now, evermore.

Gather we our voices together as one man’s voice !
Be our multitudinous fancies a single choice !
When the woodman hath felled trees in the forest, which
stood
Shoulder to shoulder, when he lets the wind into the wood,

PELOPS

If haply, in the midst of the clearing, he leave one bole,
Never so big, standing sole,
Very soon afterwards, the wintry gust overthrows
Root and branch ! O Princes, thus it goes
Sore against Pelops in fatherhood.

Every man of us who wear for chaplet the shrub
Pallas Athene created, whom the sacred umpires dub
Victors of victories, find the perennial truth :
Worse were a city of lonely palaces, than a booth
Wattled in clay, woven by hand of a dutiful seed.
Mourn we for Pelops, indeed ;
Yea ; and also remember the mourning that lately awoke
Even in Midia. A consuming yoke
Pelops laid on the bride of his youth.

*(Re-enter HERACLES, opening the tent, and discovering the body
of PELOPS dead. Around the body stand ELDERS
and WOMEN of Pisa, bearing funeral offerings.)*

WOMEN. Woe is me ! Woe is me !

CHORUS.

The women cry.

The men of Pisa stand, with bowed head, by.

HERACLES. Me, son of Zeus, give me, for it is mine,
To lay down the law in Elis. The fat kine
Which fraudulent Augeas would not yield—
The cattle I have driven from the field—
Shall, to my Father, spare a hecatomb,

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

Hard by our Stadium and Hippodrome,
In sacrifice—a hundred head and more—
Upon the Olympian altar reared before
The Olympian temple. Touching your severe king
Pelops, whom to his resting-place now bring,
I charge you, O daughters of Pisa, give ye ear ;
Your Elders and your Archons, every year,
Shall offer up a victim without spot,
Drawback or blemish, corded with a knot,
Before the sepulchre ; a testimony
And a memorial to your sons to be,
Of that dead Pelops, great in word and deed
In his life-time, and getting goodly seed.
Salt cakes, and fillets of the tufted wool
Keep his remembrance as the moon at full
For ever while the Olympian trials are tried
By strength of Hellas ! This ye shall provide,
Elders of Pisa ; I lay on you the charge.
See to the heroic Cult each year ; enlarge
And magnify the honour which shall cling
About the name and memory of your king
Whom you to-day commit unto the grave ;
And annually let your libations lave
His holy tomb. Your Archons, every year,
Shall in this fit solemnity appear ;

PELOPS

Lest men forget the dust out of the which
Bright glory springeth up to make you rich.
And you, ye Hellenic Chiefs, my hand confirms
Cyclic Olympiads in their proper terms,
To you and to your sons. But now, as due,
Follow sepulchral rites. Our words be few.
Since here Olympian Zeus once wrestled a fall,
Beside Alpheus, therefore one and all
Calling upon the Father of Gods, from whom
Myself am, build we our Pelopium ;
Neither forgetting Hippodamia's tomb
To serve with honey from the honey-comb :
So always, at this festival, invoke
My Sire, the God of the Dodonian oak ;
For he is very loving to the soil
Hereabouts.

CHORUS. These bring honey, wine and oil.

WOMEN. Tantalid Pelops,
So as a war-horse drops,
Even as a war-horse that hath stumbled,
So art thou humbled.

Farewell, fare thee well !
Hades hath asphodel
Common as thistles, in Elysium's lowest
Whither thou goest.

THE VICTORS AT OLYMPIA

CHORUS. We, the prime and foremost out of Hellas
gathered,
Led by Heracles, the child of woman and of Zeus,
Do to earth and fire commit the man who fathered
Elis. The blood-red wine, the blood-red wine we sluice.

HERACLES. Pelops, Pelops, Pelops, in thy mortal
seizure
Gript of death, I praise thee, foster-father of thy town,
Lord of Peloponnesus, treasurer of treasure.
Rapine and extortion, thou, Pelops, hast put down.

WOMEN. Judge of Hippodamia, just and without pity,
Awful surgeon, full of righteousness ! In our degree,
Maidens, wives and widows, we daughters of thy city
Bring thee wafer-cakes and oil to waste for thee.

CHORUS. Pelops, hail ! Hail, father Zeus, Olympian
Shepherd !
Pelops was, alive, a man of war, and strong in peace.
Also, now to Bacchus, hunter of the leopard,
Let the altar smoke for all us men of Greece !

(Exeunt OMNES, in procession.)

TANTALUS

A Satyric Play

TANTALUS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

TANTALUS. SILENUS. CHORUS OF SATYRS.

The SCENE is laid before the Cave of Tantalus in Orcus.

(Enter SILENUS with the CHORUS.)

SILENUS. Unto the home of Tantalus, the long home
Of Tantalus, it is our fate to come.
This is the cave, ho ! My poor, foundered ass
Hitch up beside the stream, and leave to grass,
My jolly fellows. Be not crestfallen.
This is the region of departed men ;
But be not terrified ; Satyrs are ye,
Not human beings. Boys, who have fared with me,
Holding me somewhat upright in my seat
Upon my beast, I bid you, sing ; and greet
Mine ears, with a recital why we fled
Bacchus, beside whom we went drunk to bed

PELOPS

In so much comfort. Let the tale be sung,
In Naxos how great Dionysus flung
His arms round Ariadne, Theseus' joy ;
While all we fled, to escape hen-pecked annoy.

CHORUS. Ariadne was Theseus' love,
In Naxos where, in a myrtle grove,
Our god and king, Dionysus found
Both of them. First the Wine-god drowned
The hero's strength in the ivy bowl ;
Then, like a pirate shrewd, he stole
Ariadne to be his own.
But we found all our joyance gone.
What have Satyrs who love the sun
Of midday, or the midnight moon,
To tipple by, and caper and sing
And dance and holloa in a ring,
To do with a milk-white woman's wiles,
Gust and thunder-shower and smiles ?
So off and away, on a perilous road,
To wretched Tantalus' grim abode,
We came, not by a chosen way
But by haphazard. And to-day
We greet with song the dismal bower
Of him who in an evil hour
Deceived the Gods with the infant feast ;
His own son Pelops, himself the priest,
He had sacrificed. But Olympus knew,
All save Demeter—and sniffed at the brew.

TANTALUS

She, in sorrow for Proserpine lost,
Ate of the pottage. Which eating cost
Pelops a shoulder that she ate.
So, when the Gods would re-instate
The victim, the Immortals cut
And polished in ivory, and put
Into its place, with swivel joint,
A graven substitute, point for point
So perfect, it was never known
That Pelops' shoulder was not his own.
But Tantalus was driven to death
By the outraged Gods, so the story saith.
And here he dwells. And, to mock his skill
In cookery, which he used so ill,
This doom and fate on him is laid ;
For everlasting to famish and fade
In fierce desire of victual and drink,
Unsatisfied. This is he, as I think.

(Enter, from his cave, TANTALUS.)

TANTALUS. For ever, thirst and hunger, hunger and
thirst !
I cannot even sleep, which is the worst
Of all. O thou most sleek, plump and full-fed
And juicy like a gourd, I see thy head
Like a ripe pumpkin on thy shoulders rest.
Thou art Silenus, fatted on the best :

PELOPS

Silenus, or else nothing.

SILENUS. I am he.

TANTALUS. Oh, what good God hath sent thee here to me?

But where is Bacchus? For I see the press
Of satyrs. Ah, me! in my wretchedness,
I call the River Gods to touch my mouth.
Yon skins are not empty?

SILENUS. Where toward the South
Turn the tanned hill slopes, this full freight was drawn
Out of the kindly earth, dawn after dawn,
Unto dusk after dusk.

TANTALUS. I knew it well.

SILENUS. Month after month then made the good
grape swell.

TANTALUS. That I believe.

SILENUS. And then the wine-vat ran
Round merry feet. To Bacchus and to Pan
Oozed out the increase.

TANTALUS. You but whet my taste.

SILENUS. Draw near.

TANTALUS. Yea, I am very loath to waste,
As tipsy reveller doth, one precious drop,
Even upon my beard.

SILENUS. Come, fill your crop

TANTALUS

With meat and drink at once. For I suppose
Hunger forgets itself, when the wine flows.

TANTALUS. I thank thee, good Silenus.

SILENUS. Stay awhile !

Sit and converse. That banqueting were vile,
Unseasoned with the garnish of good tales.

TANTALUS. Yea, but sip as we talk.

SILENUS. Hand up your bales

Of merchandise we deal in, jolly satyrs.

TANTALUS. Hand up your wine-skins. That is all
that matters !

CHORUS. Shepherd or fisherman can be
Merry a-shore, and merry at sea ;
But never a one makes merry as we.

Where Silenus shows his face
Is fine weather ; every place
Is the city of our populace !

SILENUS. Sit on the ground ; these lads will bear the
cup.

As I began—to take the story up—
To Bacchus I belong.

TANTALUS. May I not quaff
One brimming bowl, and hear thee ?

PELOPS

SILENUS. Drink is a staff
For most unsteady leaning. I know well
Thy history ; nor need I bid thee tell
How thou didst lose thy kingdom and thy peace,
To outlast death itself. Friend,——

TANTALUS. Good now, cease !

SILENUS. Thou gav'st the Olympians too rich a
meal.

TANTALUS. Pour ! and spare words ; the ancient
breach to heal.

SILENUS. I am not querulous. Patience, I say.
Thou shalt hear all. We are not through the day
By half. And thou hast everlasting time.

TANTALUS. Methinks the juice of Bacchus were
sublime !

SILENUS. True, true ! Scarcely believe me, when I
tell

How out of Bacchus' fellowship I fell,
Who gave the wine-press. I, who budge for no man,
Am come to Hades to avoid a woman.

TANTALUS. For love of mercy, hand the wine-skin
round,
Good, friendly Satyrs.

SILENUS. Full-bodied wine and sound !
Thou art not ignorant, concerning Crete,

TANTALUS

Of the Athenian's now world-famous feat
In mastering the half-man-and-half-bull.
But afterwards, Bacchus filled Theseus full
With monstrous draughts of honey-sweetened wine.

TANTALUS. The thought of liquor makes me feel
divine !

SILENUS. So, conquering this doughty conqueror,
It stretched him on the bridal bed to snore.
Sunk in which brutish trance within the chamber,
Him marked Ariadne, in his fevered slumber.

TANTALUS. Enough of talk ! Give me a draught, I
say,
In the God's name ; or just a cooling spray
On my tormented tongue.

SILENUS. Go, lick thy nose,
As a dog does. I am not near the close.
While Egeus' son is pillowed like a sot,
The God of Wine, laying a ready plot,
Beguiles our Cretan mistress to forget
Her lusty swain.

TANTALUS. Shall not the wine flow yet ?

SILENUS. Ask me to paint the merriment and mirth ?
There is not such another bride on earth.
I am no lyrist ; the erotic vein
Comes ill from me. I am a toper plain.

PELOPS

TANTALUS. My lips wax dry, my ears wax dull no less.

SILENUS. For Bacchus and the runaway princess,
Let youthful poet turn the epigram
Unto the nakedness of Love's own dam :
For us, come, glorify the holy dew
The roystering God distils of rosy hue.
Shall we not praise the grape-juice, mighty king,
Before we gulp it down ?

CHORUS. Shall we not bring
More skins of wine, and broach them at the cave?

SILENUS. Be not officious in thy service, knave.

CHORUS. The man will die of thirst. I cannot bear
To see him die of thirst.

SILENUS. Be that my care.

TANTALUS. These Satyrs well instruct humanity.

SILENUS. They bark too soon. To heel, to kennel,
ye !

TANTALUS. Check not their forward mood.

SILENUS. First let them limn
Dionysus' doings, in Satyric hymn.

CHORUS. Child of the daughter of Cadmus born,
Who drivest men mad ; by whom are torn,
Limb from limb, wild cat and lynx,
More terrible than the Theban Sphinx,

TANTALUS

Now hast thou entered into us ;
But canst not possess parched Tantalus.
Where thou comest, Bacchus, my king,
Upside down is everything.
Mariners leap into the sea ;
Masts become an ivy tree,
With the yardarm and the sail ;
Oars become serpents of slimy trail.
So thy maddening mysteries change
The fashion of things to a fashion strange.

TANTALUS. Bacchus is great !

SILENUS. Let the hierophants conclude.

TANTALUS. I love him so, I fain would suck his blood.

CHORUS. We weary of these cartloads ; and fain
would pour
Into thy cavities.

TANTALUS. Bacchus, I adore.
Lighten those wine-skins, emptied, lads, for me.

SILENUS. Let the antistrophe recited be.

CHORUS. But, woe, when, as King Lycurgus of Thrace
Setteth himself against thy face,
Men reject thee ! To vindicate,
Bacchus, thy godhead and estate,
Tragedy follows ; and stubbornness buys
Ruin. Yet in gentle guise

PELOPS

'Thou didst overrun the East,
Mounted on a tawny beast,
To plant the vine and fill the bowl
For hiccoughing folk of easy soul.

Now, master, let us bring the wine-skin near.

SILENUS. Nay, willy nilly, he shall the epode hear.

CHORUS. As a thirsty land where no water is ;
Where the water-courses are dry at the springs ;
Where the hot South sendeth a cloudless breeze ;
And around the cattle the gray gnat sings ;
Till the New Moon, in her changes, brings
The moist West clouds—such a land of want
Is the king who lieth here, arid and gaunt,
Like a sun-dried brick.
As Iris poised on a shower of rain,
In scarf of many colours drest,
Her warp and woof of sevenfold grain
Flung round her head, and for her vest—
The wind now settled in the West,
While the fleeting shadow lifts
Before the sun—so are Bacchus' gifts.
Lap, lap, lap ; and lick !

SILENUS. Again !

TANTALUS. I must beseech you, let them rest.
Deeds, and not words, commend the Godhead best.

TANTALUS

CHORUS. Good master, we ourselves are parched as
 pease
With singing.

SILENUS. Well, pour nectar on the lees.
Here is the wine-skin, I will cut its throat.

TANTALUS. Oh, now I hang upon a thread, and dote
Upon the solace I expect. Ah, me !
I am as mad with thirst. Eternity
Parches before me. Oh, delicious fruit,
Delicious gurgle !

SILENUS. Oh, to be a newt,
A water-lizard in a spawning pond !
For shame, great king ! I would not be so fond.

TANTALUS. Mock me no more.

SILENUS. Drink then ; I bid thee, drink !

TANTALUS. I cannot. See, the drops, in envy, shrink
From gums and gills, even as the globes that stand
Upon hot metal. Give me, in mine own hand,
The bulging wine-skin.

SILENUS. Nay ; but thou dost waste
The generous gift. Is it not, touch and taste ?

CHORUS. If thou art coy,
We will teach our eyes to wink,
We our far-away thoughts will think,
While with the wine-skin thou dost toy.

PELOPS

Hermes, they say,
When that Bacchus was a child,
Took him in both arms, and smiled ;
Tossing his babyhood all the day.

TANTALUS. The liquid hisses off me, guilty wretch
As I must own I am. Oh, could I fetch
A sigh, and swallow ! Dry as bone, I feel
Tartarus all my inward parts anneal,
Ere I can rinse lip in the pleasant stream
Within the vessel ; all goes up in steam !
My eyes start from their sockets ; my lip are black ;
My skin, as opening at the seams, doth crack !

SILENUS. Take a long breath were best. Throw back
thy head.

Tip it down red lane. Is it molten lead ?

TANTALUS. Accursed mocker as thou art ! How hard
The Gods are, only they know who have dared
Their wrath as I have.

CHORUS. Toss it off ! Have done !

TANTALUS. Upon ye mockers rest my malison !

SILENUS. Why wilt thou curse thy friends ? Soak,
and grow fat.

TANTALUS. Thrice blessed were I, could I.

CHORUS. Canst not that ?

Is it then true, a thing I never met

TANTALUS

In man, that wine thy gullet will not wet?

SILENUS. Consume our vintage, not thyself.

TANTALUS. Oh! Oh!

Hunger and thirst, for ever. Woe, woe, woe!

SILENUS. Thou usest most Promethean terms. Hence-
forth—

Since thou my bounty spillest on the earth—

Pandora woo thee no further! I see thee shrunken;

Thin as a rake, a shadow!

TANTALUS. I see thee drunken;

Yet do not envy thee who can make sport

Of such mere wretchedness as mine.

SILENUS. In short,

What the Gods pile on thee, I cannot stir

From off thy shoulders. Mine own load would tire

My back-ache, without laughter which I feed

On thee or any man. I give thee rede

To stead thee, if thou wilt shake off the curse.

TANTALUS. Give thy advice; for I can be no worse.

Yet would I rather that thy mouth were stopt

From uttering words, as mine is to rain dropt

Upon my tongue. But if thou wilt begone

When thou hast said, I pray thee then, say on.

SILENUS. Thou art content to hear my counsel out?

TANTALUS. I am content to see you all turn about,

PELOPS

SILENUS. Get thee to Athens ; there shall Tantalus
Appear before just Areopagus,
As his descendant whom the Furies bit.
And when the jurors have considered it,
Doubtless some one of the Immortals shall
Allow a punishment more rational—
Say, something like a myriad-talent fine—
Less horrible than abstinence from wine.

CHORUS. Hark ! I hear the dancing of Mænads upon
the hills.
Pan is piping ; I hear his pipe.
Bacchus calls out for Silenus. The grape grows ripe ;
The young grape-cluster fills.

Hearken ! I hear the voice of Thracian Orpheus cry,
With warbled music fresh from the Shades.
We shall behold him sacrificed in the glades
And forests, where he must die.

Up, Silenus ! Silenus, leave this drouhty king ;
Everyone hath his own billet in fate.
What though the father of Pelops never shall sate
His thirst ? yet we can sing !

We are an army, an army that needs no baggage ; a host
Well equipped, if the wine-skin hold.
We have treasure trove that is better than gold.
In Bacchus be our boast !

TANTALUS

TANTALUS. The bard of Thrace, with melody so smooth
Calling Eurydice, did erstwhile soothe
Me friend of Zeus, now outcast of the Gods ;
Such mastery had Orpheus in all modes
Of different music. Now—Ah, me accurst !—
I am become an everlasting thirst !

SILENUS. May the regenerative God descend ;
And, like a wine-skin, fill thee and distend !

TANTALUS. Thou corpulency, I abominate both
Thy drowning and my drought : excess I loathe.
Begone, before I loose upon your flanks
Cerberus, the triple hound !

(Exit, into cave.)

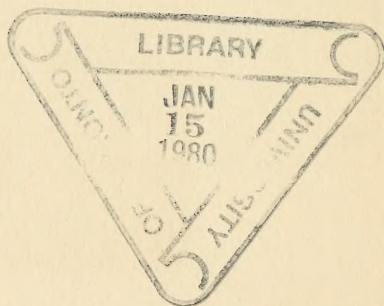
SILENUS. Are these my thanks,
Thou disappointed fox ? To give thee riddance—
A vineyard I, and crave some prop and guidance—
If needs I go, as this curst king insists,
Cross hands, good fellows, two and two, grasp wrists
And carry me forth on adventurous track ;
Since ye can hardly take me pick-a-back !

CHORUS. To Athens Hill shall Silenus come,
Where Satyr, with tail and hairy coat,
Shall give Melpomene spacious room :
A troop with the horns of a goat.

(Exeunt SILENUS and CHORUS.)

LONDON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
DUKE STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E., AND GREAT WINDMILL STREET, W.



Erin

McDonnell, D.
Due Date Bookmark

Robarts Library

DUE DATE:

Dec. 21, 1993

For telephone renewals
call

978-8450

Hours:

Monday to Thursday
9 am to 9 pm

PR
4599
D425P4

Dillon, Arthur
Pelops

